

MARY: THE HISTORY OF A THEOLOGY OF TENDERNESS

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Luella Lancaster Floyd
June 1973

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This dissertation, written by

Luella Lancaster Floyd

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

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June 1973
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Dean

Dedicated to
my mother Anna Kummer Lancaster,
and to my daughter Elaine,
and to my granddaughter, Evangeline.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It has been the purpose of this dissertation to explore the role of Mary in the Christian religion and the development of dogma concerning her.

This was written with the hope of coming to a better understanding with our Catholic brethren on the subject which might contribute to rapprochement and ecumenical union.

It has also been pointed out that the person of Mary represents the quality of tenderness to much of humanity and that a sense of tenderness is an essential part of the ministry of the Church.

I believe that this study is important because any emerging ecumenical theology must necessarily include an understanding of the role of Mary in its various forms. Protestants have worked little in this field and we need to know the development of the role of Mary during the years and the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church concerning her. We cannot just shut our eyes and ignore the problem for it is there. A question behind this research is the serious theological problem: "Has the cult of Mary taken away from

the sole redeeming power of our Lord, Jesus Christ?"

The writer believes that it is important for modern Protestants to find a *via media* in which we can give Mary the honor due to her because of her role in the drama of the Gospels. Admittedly there may be excesses in some forms of Mariology. But the quality of tenderness that Mary represents is important for all religion.

The idea for this dissertation was suggested to the writer when Michelangelo's statue of the Pieta was damaged at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in May 1972. The whole world was shocked as witnessed by the headlines carried by the press (cf. Plates I, II, and III). It occurred to the writer that what caused such dismay was not just the damaging of a work of art but that Mary represented something very dear to the heart of humanity in general--both Protestants and Catholics. That quality, I believe, is tenderness.

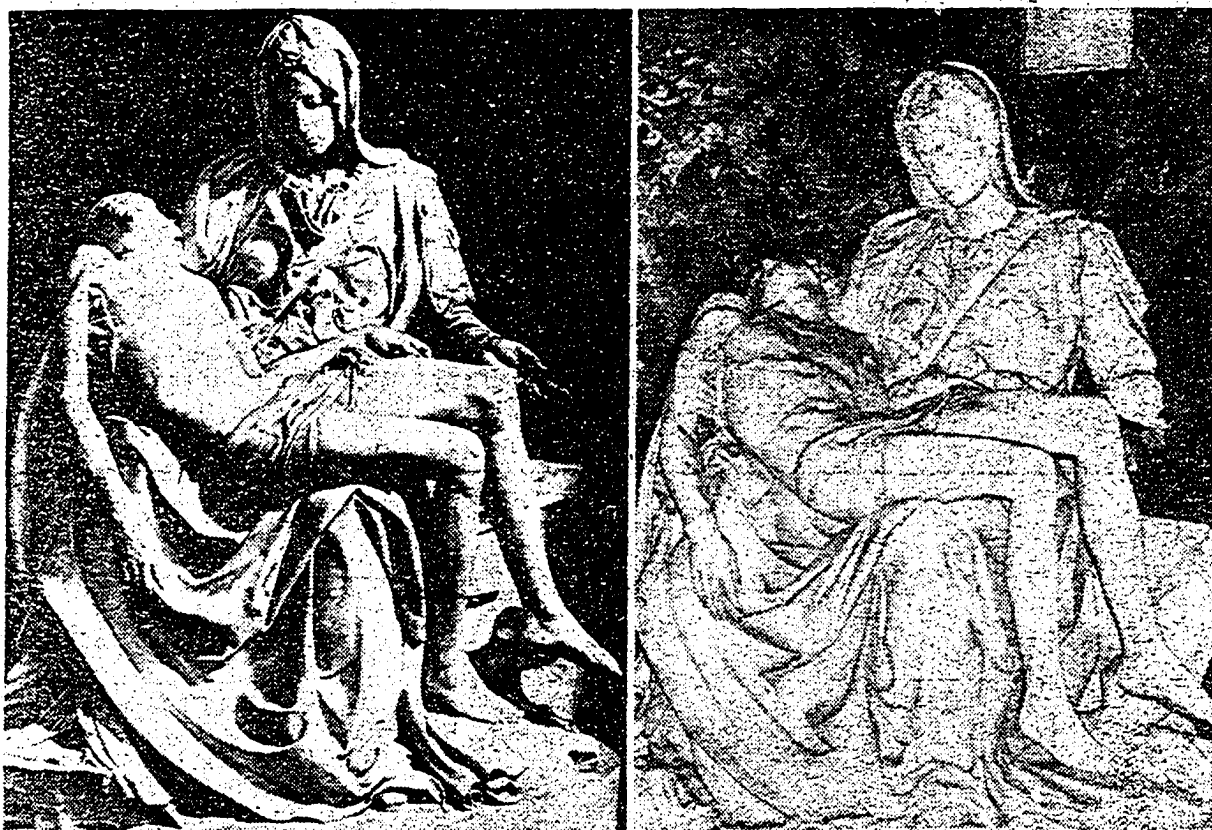
After I have developed the history of Mary in the tradition, I will point out that this quality of tenderness which she represents is essential for general Christian ministry to others.

B. METHODOLOGY

A two-fold methodology will be used. A study of doctrine and theology of Mary in the tradition of the Christian religion will be made, and this will include the use of art illustrations to show how artists have had their own

way of "doing" theology. Artists have interpreted the events in the life of Mary and these have had a great influence on piety. The dissertation will seek to relate these two traditions of interpretation as they have conditioned present dogmas and lay piety, especially in the Roman Catholic tradition.

The Gospels of the New Testament will be discussed



DAMAGED—At left is Pieta, priceless Michelangelo statue, as it appeared before a man damaged it with hammer. Photo at right, taken after

the attack, shows broken left arm of Madonna. Nose and part of left eye also were chipped off and there were several other nicks about the head.

UPI Wirephoto

PLATE I

(From the *Los Angeles Times*, XCI, May 22, 1972, p. 1)

Man With Hammer Disfigures Priceless Pieta at Vatican

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A man wielding a 12-pound sledgehammer broke off the left arm and disfigured the face of the Madonna in Michelangelo's Pieta Sunday. Damage to the priceless statue — one of the world's greatest works of art — depicting the mother of Jesus holding his body in her arms, may be irreparable.

Seconds after the attack in St. Peter's Basilica an off-duty Italian soldier seized a bearded, long-haired man as he tried to fight his way through a shocked and horrified crowd of thousands in the basilica.

Vatican police identified the man as Laszlo Toth, 33, a Hungarian-born geologist now a resident of Sydney, Australia.

'Now I Can Die'

"He insists he is Jesus Christ," one Vatican source said. He was quoted as saying, "If you kill me, I'll only go to heaven."

"Today is my 33rd birthday, the age when Christ died. For that reason, I smashed Pieta today. I did it because the mother of God does not exist. I am Christ, I am Michelangelo. I have reached the age of Christ and now I can die."

Police said Toth had previously been expelled from Italy for creating a disturbance through his demands to see Pope Paul VI. After interrogation he was turned over to Italian police, who said the vandal had concealed the sledgehammer under a raincoat carried over his arm.

After delivering his weekly blessing to the crowd in St. Peter's Square, the Pope descended into the basilica to see for himself the damage to the statue.

He knelt before it and prayed for 30 seconds in the presence of high Vatican officials and scores of tourists. Then he listened to an official report on the incident. He stayed there for seven minutes and then returned to his apartments.

The attack came as work was

Please Turn to Page 7, Col. 7

PIETA ATTACK

Continued from First Page

nearing completion on a huge plate of shatterproof glass to protect the Pieta. It was due to go into place in about a month.

Witnesses said a tall man in a blue jacket jumped over a marble railing around the altar on which the Pieta stands.

A guard is always on duty there but before he could interfere the man had scrambled up onto the statue itself and, shouting "I'm Jesus Christ," began battering away with the sledgehammer.

After breaking off the left arm, the man tried to smash the head of the Madonna. He broke off the nose and part of the left eye.

The crowd began to scream and other guards rushed in, but the man leaped over the railing and tried to fight his way through the crowd. The soldier then grabbed him and held him until police arrived.

Men and women nearest the statue sobbed. One woman fainted. Vatican sources said that although the Madonna's arm might be repaired it was feared the damage done to the nose and eye could not be completely restored. When the arm fell to the floor, a hand and finger shattered. Almost an hour after the attack, workmen were on their hands and knees on the floor searching for any fragment of marble.

Francesco Bacchini,



Laszlo Toth

(AP Wirephoto)

chief engineer of the Vatican, told newsmen the Madonna's damaged eye would be most difficult if not impossible, to restore. He said repairs to the arm, head and neck would be easier. The figure of Jesus Christ was not damaged.

After the incident the Pieta was draped with a red cloth.

The statue is 6 feet 7 inches high and almost as wide. An almost life-sized Mary sits supporting her son's body across her lap, his head hung back in death and his arms and legs dangling.

The Pieta has been a virtually unblemished masterpiece. The only damage had been to one finger that was broken centuries ago and had been restored so that the break was undetectable.

PLATE II

(From the Los Angeles Times, XCI, May 22, 1972, pp. 1 and 7.

Worth of Holy Statue Is Beyond Estimate

VATICAN CITY (UPI) — The Pieta, the only work of art Michelangelo ever signed, weighs 6,700 pounds and occupies a place of honor in St. Peter's Basilica. Its worth is beyond estimate.

The marble statue is located in the first chapel on the right of the main great bronze doors of St. Peter's Basilica. It shows the mother of Jesus cradling his broken body after the Crucifixion.

The genius called Michelangelo began carving it in 1498 at the request of the French ambassador to the court of Pope Alexander VI.

Symbolic Figure

Since it was completed and placed in the basilica in 1500, it has left the world's biggest Christian church only once — in 1964, when it was strapped into a bullet-proof, unsinkable steel case weighing six tons and shipped to New York for the World's Fair.

It was insured for \$10 million, a symbolic figure because experts agree the Pieta is irreplaceable.

The statue was gone for 19 months. When it was returned late in 1965, Pope Paul VI visited the chapel to see it and said he doubted it would ever again leave St. Peter's.

Michelangelo produced dozens of other great works — the magnificent frescoes of the Sistine

Chapel, the powerful Moses, the heroic David and the Medici tombs among them.

But only on his Pieta did he place his name—"Michael Angelus Bonarotus Florent. Faciebat," — that is "Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, sculpted this."

The name is visible on the cloth which falls from the left shoulder of Mary.

Not Well Lighted

The statue is not well lighted and visitors cannot easily see the face of the dead Jesus.

That was the way Michelangelo intended it but someone tilted the statue forward in the 18th century and not until its return in 1965 was the Pieta placed the way Michelangelo planned.

The statue is located behind a waist-high marble fence, but anyone can approach it. There is no gate.

Pilgrims and tourists often approach the statue to place flowers or offerings beneath it although Vatican security measures were increased in 1969 after a German tourist smashed the marble fingers on the left hand of a statue of Pope Pius VI in the crypt beneath the basilica's main altar.

Michelangelo did not do the marble cross or bronze angels holding a crown, now part of the statue group. They were added later.

PLATE III

(From the *Los Angeles Times*, XCI, May 22, 1972, p. 7)

as they present the story of Mary, for they are the primary source of information. The *Protevangelium of James*, which is the apocryphal "filling in" about the life of Mary in which she herself is given special consideration, is reviewed at some length for some of the principle dogmas have arisen from this document. Mary, as she appears in the early creeds of the church and at the important Council of Ephesus (431), will be studied in the tradition acknowledged by Protestants and Catholics alike. A survey of Vatican Council II will be presented because the role of Mary has been precisely defined there for the first time in connection with the Roman Catholic Church.

With the belief that Mary's meaning for all humanity has been made universal in art, we will illustrate the different developments by the use of art works. Among the themes will be the following: the mother of our Lord (life-giving); Mary with John under the cross (comfort in death); her presentation at the Temple (purity); the assumption to heaven (intercession role now in dogma) and others will be presented as an antiphon, as it were, to the dogmatic literature.

CHAPTER II

THE FEMALE PRINCIPLE IN RELIGION

One might designate the quality of tenderness we have spoken of as the female principle in religion, a principle which has been a major theme in religion throughout the ages. Among the earlier pre-Christian forms of this principle were the pagan goddesses Isis, Cybele and Astarte. Isis, the Egyptian queen, was the wife of Osiris and queen of the underworld; Cybele was known as the Great Mother of the Gods in Greek and Latin literature from the time of Pindar, and was the ancient oriental-Greek-Roman deity. Astarte, the great goddess of the Semitic pantheon, was the chief deity of Sidon.¹ Astarte will be discussed at some length because she appears in the Old Testament as Ashereth and the influence of this deity is impressive in the scriptural traditions. "[Her name] is rendered Astarte in the Septuagint [Greek] version of the Bible and Ashtoreth [plural Ashtaroth] in the Hebrew, being there vocalized as *bosheth*, 'shame,' to indicate Hebrew contempt for her cult"²

¹Margaret Alice Murray, "Isis," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), XII, 662-663; "Great Mother of the Gods," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), X, 776-777; Thomas Fish, "Astarte," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), II, 633.

²Fish, *op. cit.*, II, 633.

(Hapocrates) on her lap.

. . . Representations of Isis are infrequent until the New Empire, after which they become increasingly common. She was the most popular goddess from the time of Psamtik I (663-610 B.C.) till the coming of Christianity, by which time the naturalistic type of art had so ousted traditional Egyptian artistic conventions that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between pagan and Christian figures of a mother and child.⁴



PLATE IV

RELIEF OF ISIS
in the Temple of Kalabsha, Lower Nubia

⁴*Ibid.*, 662-663.

B. CYBELE:

THE GRAECO-ROMAN TRADITION (MOTHERHOOD)

A terra-cotta Cybele excavated at Camimus, Rhodes, in the early 5th century depicts the Great Mother of the Gods as a very earthy woman seated on a throne with a lion cub in her lap. Thus the aspect of motherhood is the most prominent characteristic of Cybele in Roman, Greek and oriental traditions. This concept is a type of universal motherhood. She was the great parent of all, of gods and men as well as the lower orders of creation. She was called the Mountain Mother and is depicted in caves and upon mountains where lions are her companions.⁵

Though her cult stood alone, in its fully developed state it was association with that of Attis. However, the cult of Attis never existed independently. Cybele is interpreted by the philosophers of the late Roman Empire as symbolizing the relations of Mother Earth to her children, the fruits. "In this interpretation they were not far wrong, for Cybele and all her kind are embodiments of the earth's fertility."⁶

In 204 B.C., in obedience to the Sibylline prophecy which asserted that whenever enemies could be expelled and

⁵"Great Mother of the Gods," X, 776-777.

⁶*Ibid.*

conquered if the Idean Mother was brought to Rome from Pessimus, the cult of the Great Mother was transferred to Rome and established in a temple on the Palatine. By the



PLATE V

TERRA COTTA CYBELE
excavated at Camirus, Rhodes: Early 5th Century B. C.

end of the republic, her cult had attained prominence, and under the empire it became one of the most important along with those of Mithra and Isis. An annual festival with games was the main public event in the worship of the Great Mother.⁷

The art of the empire shows many works depicting

⁷*Ibid.*

the Great Mother; however, none of these is particularly noteworthy. She generally is represented on a throne with mural crown, veil, well draped and accompanied by two lions. In literature, the Great Mother is often mentioned; but there is only one surviving work of importance, a poem by Catullus. "Her importance in the history of religion, however, is very great; for her cult, like the other mystic worships, was at once a rival to Christianity and a steppingstone to it."⁸

C. ASTARTE:

THE NEAR EASTERN TRADITION (FERTILITY)

The Old Testament connects the female principle, the Ashoreth, with the Baals. The great sin against Yahweh was the worship of these Baals and Ashtoreth. The Israelites' conflict between Israelite and cultic religions brought about a constant struggle; and Canaanite idolatry, for example, was believed to be the cause of plagues and panic on the land.

Gerhard von Rad notes that "Yahwism without the first commandment is positively inconceivable." Resolution of the conflict began at the time the first worshippers of Yahweh entered the arable land of Palestine, and when Yahweh's exclusive claim on the lives of the Israelites

⁸*Ibid.*

prohibited any co-existence of the cults. Von Rad points to a remnant of the practical functioning of this cultic intolerance in the rite of the renunciation at Schechem of any foreign figurines of Astarte (so many of which have been found in excavations) before believers started on a pilgrimage. (Gen. 35:2f; Josh. 24:23) However, in most instances, we must be content with the record of a long struggle to preserve Yahwism.⁹

Von Rad adds that Yahweh stood absolutely above sex. Since Astarte represented the principles and rites of fertility, she was a profound offense to Israel. In the Canaanite cults, copulation and procreation were mystically regarded and celebrated as divine events, but Israel did not so regard them. It was excluded because it was a manifestation of the finite and creatureliness of man.¹⁰

The First Commandment contained the idea of Yahweh's zeal. An equivalent of jealousy, says von Rad, adding that it was not the "high gods" of the great empires, Marduk in Babylon or Amon in Egypt, but rather it was the worship of deities indigenous to Palestine that presented the temptation. These deities he lists as Baal, Bethel, Dagon, Astarte, Anath, Asherah and others.¹¹

⁹Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), I, 26-27.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, I, 27-28.

¹¹*Ibid.*, I, 207-208.

Astarte was the great goddess of the Semitic pantheon, and the chief deity of Sidon.

The inscription of the Phoenician King of Sidon, Eshmunazar, records the building or restoration of a temple to Eshmen, the Baal of Sidon, and to 'Astarte of the name of Baal.' . . . In Jerusalem, Solomon built for her a high place which king Josiah 'defiled' (I Kings 6:5; II Kings 23:13). Figurines of her cult as goddess of fertility and reproduction was widespread. Some of her images show foreign influence; those with a lotus flower in the hands and two long ringlets adorning the head point toward Egypt.

Astarte was worshipped in Cyprus, in Sicily, in Sardinia and at Carthage. She became identified with the Egyptian deities Isis and Hathor. By the Greco-Roman world she was assimilated to Aphrodite and Artemis, Diana and Juno. Her identification with Aphrodite/Venus suggests that she was equated with the planet Venus by the Syrians, . . .

The Moabites, neighbours of the Israelites worshipped Ashtar-Chemosh. This compound name may indicate that Astarte was the spouse of the Moabite Baal; the Bible makes her the spouse of the Baal of Carmel--if, as is likely, the English rendering 'prophets of the groves (Asherah)' stands for an original 'Prophets of Ashtoreth' (I Kings 18:19). . . . At Ascalon the Philistines deposited the armour of Saul in the temple of Ashtoreth Astarte (I Sam. 31:10).¹²

The Biblical account of the return of the Ark of the Covenant (symbol of the Hebrew God) in I Samuel 5-6, tells of how the Philistines wanted to get rid of the ark which they had captured and taken to Ashdod because it caused their god Dagon to fall down and be broken; and later caused plague and panic in other towns where they took the ark. They returned it to the Israelites who received it with joy.

¹²Fish, *op. cit.*

Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, 'If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your heart to the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.' So Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only. (I Sam. 7:3-4)

The note on the above in the Oxford Annotated Bible states these were "probably added by the Deuteronomic editor, who felt that the worship of false gods was always the chief sin of the people (Jg. 2:11-15; 3:7; 10:6; 13:1; etc.). The Baals and the Ashtaroth (plural of Ash-toreth, the Hebrew name for Astarte, goddess of fertility and profane love) were the principle deities of the Canaanites, often worshipped also by the Israelites when they departed from the true faith."¹³

Jg. 2:11-15, v. 13, They forsook the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.
 3:7, And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord their God and service the Baals and the Asherath.
 13:1, And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, . . .

II Chronicles 7 gives God's promise and threat at the same time of the dedication of Solomon's temple.

if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (v. 14)

But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and go and

¹³Oxford Annotated Bible, I Sam. vv. 3-4 note.

serve other gods and worship them, then I will pluck you up from the land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and will make it a proverb and a by-word among all peoples. (vv. 19-20.)

The radical monotheism of the Old Testament is illustrated in these citations from the period of the struggle of Israel with the Astarte cults.

D. MARY:

THE WESTERN TRADITION (TENDERNESS)

How does Mary differ from the female goddesses of antiquity and Biblical times? What actually is Mary's meaning for contemporary belief? If she worshipped as a deity in her own right, then she may be detracting from Judeo-Christian concept of monotheism (cf. Meggie, below).

An evidence of the piety devoted to Mary may be seen in the city of Topeka, Kansas, a church with the name "The Most Pure Heart of Mary." Inside the edifice are stained glass windows with pictures not of Christ or the Apostles, but each a beautiful portrayal of some event in the life of Mary. There are side altars to Mary and the main altar consists of a huge wooden cross with Jesus hung thereon and with Mary standing below looking up at him. Above all this is a crown. The proportions are of gigantic size, about 20 by 30 feet.

In a recent trip to Mexico, the writer found near the pyramids outside Mexico City (Teotihuacan) a small

clay figurine of a female figure with a child. The mother has roses in her crown. Since the Virgin Mary is often depicted with roses--the mystical rose--this is perhaps a clay figurine of Mary which is further evidenced by the popular folk piety associated with this person.



PLATE VI

CLAY FIGURINE OF MOTHER AND CHILD
found by writer near Pyramids outside Mexico City, 1962

Old Testament Pre-figurations

Jeremiah admonishes the people because they "make cakes for the queen of heaven," (7:18). In his oracles

denouncing the refugees in the land of Egypt who have returned to the worship of the "queen of heaven," we are told that

the queen of heaven was the Babylonian-Assyrian goddess Ishtar, goddess of the star, Venus; compare the Canaanite Astarte, Greek Aphrodite, Roman Venus. First introduced, presumably by Manasseh (II Kings 21:1-18), suppressed by Josiah (II Kings 23-4-14), and restored by Jehoiakim (II Kings 23-36-24:17), the cult was especially popular among women, who had an inferior role in the cult of Yahweh. Offerings included wine and star-shaped or crescent-shaped cakes or figurines bearing the image of the goddess. The cult persisted into the Christian centuries, and features of it were incorporated by the early Syrian church in the adoration of the Virgin.¹⁴

This is evidence of the popular affection for a female principle even in Israel.

I Isaiah promises the Messianic king born of a young woman, and II Isaiah speaks of comfort and tenderness as contained in the God-head itself.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (7:14)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; . . .

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called 'Mighty Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' (9:2,6).

II Isaiah thus shifts the quality of tenderness to Yahweh himself as the prophet is called to announce Yahweh's coming. The background is the council of heaven

¹⁴*Ibid.*, Jeremiah n. 44:15-28, p. 972.

from which the voices come.

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her welfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. (Is. 40:1-3, n. 1-11)

The restored "Mother" is now Jerusalem and can provide abundantly for all.

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts; that you may drink deeply with delight from the abundance of her glory. (Is. 66:10-11 and n.)

The New Testament Tradition

In the New Testament we find little historical doubt that Jesus was the son of Mary. We see her chief dogmatic role as the guarantee of the Incarnation as fulfillment of prophecy in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Probably the earliest reference to Mary in Christian literature is the phrase "born of a woman" in Gal. 4:4. Tradition in the ancient world held that only one human parent was necessary to assure that a person was genuinely human, and when applied to Jesus, it was intended to assert that he was truly a man; this in opposition to the later attempts of Docetists to deny that he had a completely human life.¹⁵ This tradition was enhanced by

¹⁵Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, "Mary," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), XIV, 991.

the early Church's translation of "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14 as "virgin." Some historians have maintained that the phrase in the Apostle's Creed was the same insistence by the church of the reality of the incarnation, but this became complicated by the emphasis on Mary's virginity.¹⁶

E. SUMMARY

This chapter on the female principle in religion has catalogued three goddesses of the past to show that they were worshipped as idols in their own right. It has especially pointed to the worship of the Ashtarothe in the land of Canaan by the Israelites when they fell away from the true religion of Yahweh.

The purpose in doing this has been to suggest that Mary's role was intended to be entirely different. Instead of being in competition with God, she was chosen by him to help bring about our salvation by being the mother of our Lord. In contrast, this goddess-worship should warn us of some of the excesses of Mariology.

It is now important to illustrate that the Incarnation sets Mary aside from these female goddesses. In fact, the Incarnation is the main legitimization of her role in the Christian religion. This may be done through the study of Mary as she is depicted in the New Testament Gospels.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

CHAPTER III

MARY IN THE CANONICAL GOSPELS

There are few citations of Mary in the New Testament.¹ These accounts can be classified into the relationships Mary had with others.

First, Mary's relationship with God is proclaimed in the Visitation of the Angel Gabriel and in the promise of God that she will bear a son, whose name will be Jesus, which means Savior. Mary's acceptance of this role is her claim: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) In the so-called Magnificat that follows, Mary declares, "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed." (Luke 1:46-55) Mary has been called from her low estate; she speaks for the hungry and those of low degree as she magnifies the Lord.

Second, Mary's relationship to her son Jesus is

¹Luke 1 and 2 - The Birth Story from Mary's point of view. Matthew 1 and 2 - The Birth Story from Joseph's point of view. Mark 3:31-35 (Mt. 12:46-50, Lk. 8:19-21) - Jesus conflict over his work. John 1:14 - "the Word became flesh," but no mention of how. John 2:1-12 - The wedding feast at Cana story. John 19:25-27 - Jesus farewell to Mary on the Cross. Mt. 13:55 (Lk. 4:22, Mk. 6:3) - the problem of Jesus' relatives. Gal. 4:4 - "born of woman" but no mention of Mary. Acts 1:14 - Mary with the disciples and his brothers after the resurrection. Luke 11:27-28 - question of veneration of Mary or keeping the Word of God.

developed in the birth accounts in Matthew 1 and 2 and Luke 1 and 2. Mark's Gospel carries no birth account. Neither Paul nor John seems to know of the birth stories, or have ignored them, and this is probably understandable since they both stress the theology of pre-existence of Christ. The Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke were later than Paul, and John has added to his Gospel the stories of the wedding in Cana and Jesus' words for his mother at the Cross.

Mary's relationship to Jesus' work is recorded in Mk. 3:31-51 when Jesus rejects her and his brothers when they come seeking him and says his real work is to do the will of God. The question of who Jesus is and who his relatives are comes up in Mt. 13:55: "Is not his mother called Mary?"

Outside of Galatians 4:4, where Paul uses the phrase "born of woman," Mary is not specifically mentioned again, and she is not here called by name; however, the brothers of Jesus are mentioned in the I Corinthians and in the letter to the Galatians. (I Cor. 8:5; Gal. 1:19, 2:9, 12)

In Acts, Mary is mentioned after the resurrection of Jesus when she, the disciples and the brothers of Jesus are all gathered together in the upper room in prayer. "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and

with his brothers." (Acts 1:14) Mary is not mentioned again but the brothers are mentioned in Acts 12:17, 15:13, and 21:18.

There is an important passage in Luke that has been interpreted by Protestants as an admonition not to worship Mary,² while Vatican II has interpreted this passage differently.

And as he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!"

But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:27-28)

Vatican II interprets this passage in this manner:

In the course of her Son's preaching she received His praise, when extolling a kingdom beyond the calculations and bonds of flesh and blood, He declared blessed (cf. Mk. 3:35, Luke 11:27-28) those who heard and kept the Word of God, as she was faithfully doing (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51).³

After the upper room scene in Acts, there are no references of Mary until the Apocryphal Legends and the dogmata of the Catholic Church where she becomes *Theotokos* (431), Ever Virgin (451).

Since the birth stories are by far the most important for our consideration since they legitimize Mary as the mother of our Lord and make her the guarantee of the

²E. P. Blair, "Mary," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, III, 292.

³Walter M. Abbott (ed.) *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 89.

incarnation and the theory of tenderness as well as the humanity of Jesus, consideration of the accounts in Matthew and Luke is warranted.

In Matthew's account the lineage of Jesus is traced through Joseph back to David. There is the recourse of angels to counsel and warn Joseph rather than Mary in this gospel. There is no angel annunciation to Mary here as in Luke's gospel. Instead, when Joseph is alarmed that Mary is expecting a child, he is visited by an angel in a dream and told not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife for what she has conceived is of the Holy Spirit. (Mt. 1:21) "The same promise of Jesus as Saviour is given: 'she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'" (Mt. 1:21) "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." (Lk. 1:31) Matthew's verse is followed by the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, while the verse from Luke is part of the angel Gabriel's annunciation. This is typical of the two versions: Matthew's gospel is replete with Old Testament prophecy and fulfillment, while Luke's gives a more rhapsodic account replete with hymns of praise.

In Matthew, when Joseph wakes from his sleep, he follows the angel's advice and takes Mary for his wife, "but knew her not *until* she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus." That "until" has been the subject of much

scholarship and debate on the centrality of virginity.

Matthew's story sets the birthplace in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the king, and includes the story of the visit of the wise men from the East who came to worship the new born king of the Jews. Herod's rage when the wise men do not return to tell him where the star led them puts him into the evil act of the slaughter of the innocents. Later, Joseph, Mary and the baby escape to Egypt, and then return to Nazareth when again told by an angel in a dream to do so.

Luke's account is generally considered to be one of the most beautiful stories in all literature. It contains a doublet of praise by joining the birth stories of John and Jesus, thus making them cousins since Mary and Elizabeth were related. A canticle in honor of John is announced by an angel to Zechariah fortelling the child's birth to Elizabeth, his wife, who is advanced in years. Then the angel Gabriel visits Mary with these words:

Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!

But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God.

And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I have no husband?'

And the angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will

overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.'

And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her. (Lk. 1:28-38)

This announcement and the obedience of Mary, "let it be to me according to your word," (Lk. 1:38) is of the same obedience that Jesus gives to the Father when he prays in Gethsemane before he goes out to his crucifixion, "Not my will, but thine be done." (Lk. 22:42)

Pelikan tells us that those who defend the virgin birth usually maintain that the true humanity was made possible when Mary accepted her role as the guarantee of the incarnation. He says that this is the original source of the title "coredemptrix" assigned to Mary in Roman Catholic theology, though the term has come to denote a more active participation by the Virgin in the redemption of mankind, the precise nature of which continues to be debated.⁴

In Carol's *Mariology* we are given this explanation of the incarnation.

Throughout her conversation with the angel, Mary displayed admirable virtues: simplicity, prudence, wisdom. When Gabriel finished speaking, Mary was confronted by the supreme test of her faith, obedience and

⁴Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, "Mary," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), XIV, 991.

humility. Would she assent to the will of the Triune God, who did not wish to save the world without Mary, (Cf. H. Barré, *Le consentement à l'Incarnation rédemptrice*, in *Marianum*, Vol. 14, 1952, pp. 233-266 . . .), to become the Mother of the Divine Word in His human nature? Would she satisfy the yearnings of mankind for salvation, the longing of the souls in Limbo for liberation, the hope of the angels for the redemption of man? Her answer to Gabriel was: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Be it done to me according to thy word' (Lk. 1:38). This shows that her faith in the angel's revelation was complete and unreserved, that her consent to be the Mother of God was not passive but active, unforced, absolutely free, that her humility was deep and her obedience wholehearted. At this moment the Incarnation took place, and the angel departed.⁵

This piety expressive of adoration of Mary is graphically depicted in the altar-piece of St. Anthony by Grünewald: The Annunciation (Plate VII); Virgin and Child with Concert of Angels (Plate VIII); and Christ on the Cross with the Virgin Mary, John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalene and John the Baptists (Plate IX). The impact from this triptych has been experienced by the writer when she visited the Unterderlinden Museum in Colmar where it is now displayed.

Of course, the dramatic suffering of Christ is the overwhelming center of our vision, but there is spiritual insight from many of the figures.

Owing to his peculiar temperament, he [Grünewald] can interpret with equal felicity both celestial bliss and shuddering pain, the anguish of the spirit and the soul's serenity. With what sensuous sensibility he

⁵Michael J. Gruenthaner, "Mary in the New Testament," in Juniper B. Carol (ed.) *Mariology* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954), I, 88.

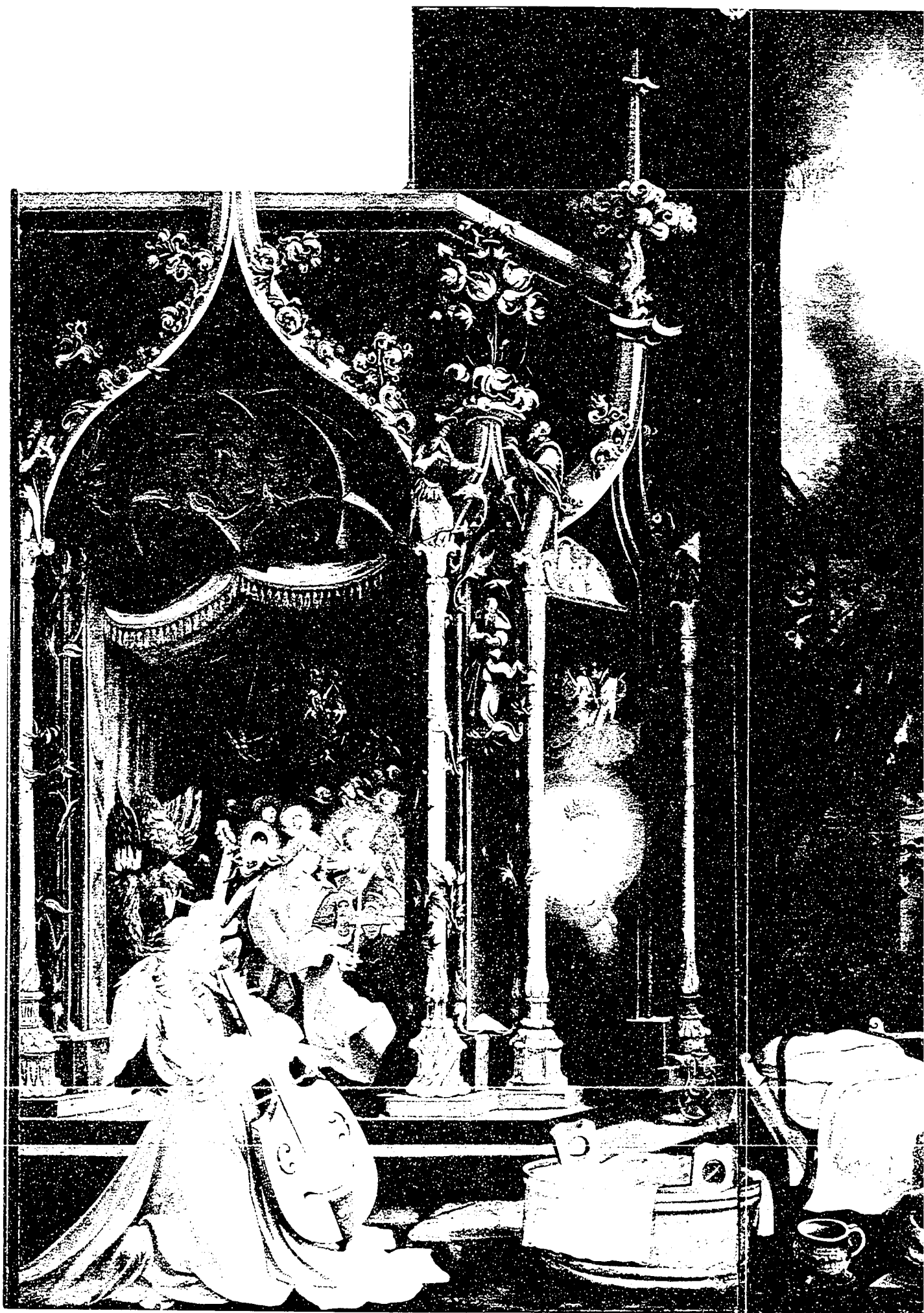
PLATE VII
"THE ANNUNCIATION"
Grünewald, 1515



PLATE VIII

VIRGIN WITH CONCERT OF ANGELS

Grünwald, 1515

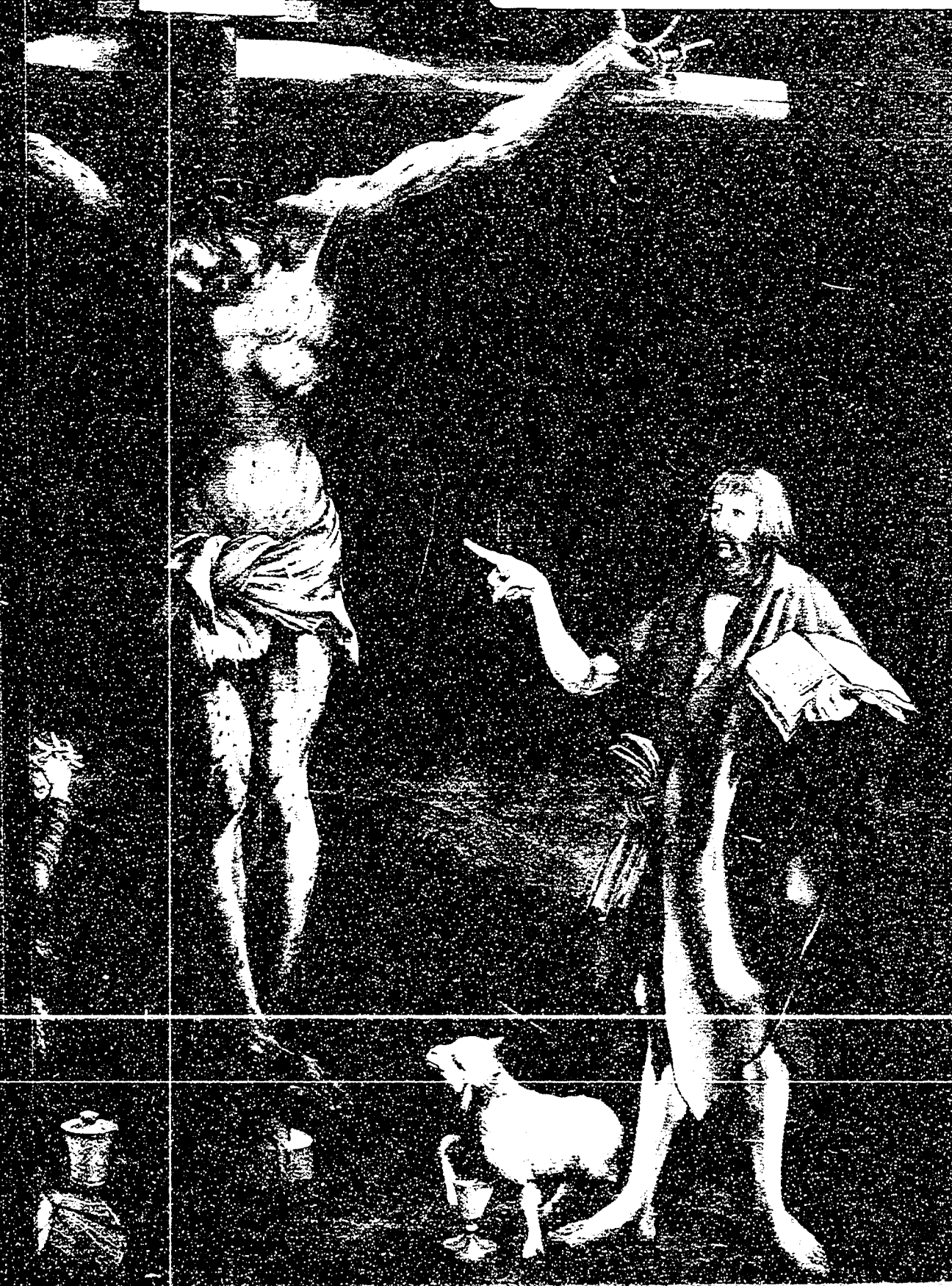


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paints the laughing child, the well-formed youth, the grown man and the grey-beard--yet no one has depicted the smile of the Virgin, the melancholy of St. Anthony or the drama of the Annunciation with greater spirituality or deeper psychological insight. Symbols of the kind so dear to the Middle Ages are strewn about his work in reckless profusion. Many of them are known to us from the Scriptures. Others would remain impenetrable mysteries, if it were not for the writings of the mystics, the Book of Prophecies of St. Bridget of Sweden in particular, which seem to have been a rich source of inspiration for Grünewald.⁶

Marcella Auclair tells us of the use to which the altar-piece was put in the Middle Ages by the Antonine monks in their hospital at Issenheim.

This hospital was famed for its treatment of persons suffering from the *mal des ardents* or 'St. Anthony's Fire' (believed to have been a sort of epilepsy). When the sufferer arrived he was laid in the chapel in view of the triptych and left for three days. There, under the influence of the tragic visions of the artist, he was deeply impressed by the malignant action of the demons of temptation. Following this terrible lesson came the message of hope in the Annunciation and the picture of the Infant Jesus in the arms of Mary. Then he saw Christ on the Cross depicted with terrifying realism, tortured by an agony far greater even than the fiery pains with which he himself was consumed. But on the third day, his eyes were greeted by the vision of the risen Christ, painted in such glory as no other artists' brush has ever achieved, and out of his torment a sublime certitude was born: by Him and with Him, he too would rise again.

By Him, and with Him, after refusing the bitter cup and then accepting it in total surrender to the will of the Father--for His will is Love--he would be cured. Not until these spiritual forces had acted on the afflicted mind was the *ardent* taken back to the hospital

⁶Pierre Schmitt, *The Isenheim Altar* (Berne: Hallway, n.d.), pp. 22, 29.

for physical treatment. For then the "morale" as we say today, which had been the source of his complaint, would have become the means of his recovery.⁷

I have chosen scenes from this altar-piece not only because of the spiritual impact they had on me when I visited the Museum to see them, but because they depict the cycle of Mary's life with Christ. We see the emphasis of her life in the birth of Christ. Although the scene of Mary with the Angels is not the actual Incarnation scene, here is the inbreaking of God's light into the world and the feeling of the entrance of eternity into our world of time. The scene of Mary under the cross has a poignancy which is in keeping with the complete and devastating suffering of Christ.

After the Annunciation we have the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth and when the baby John leaps in her womb at the approach of Mary, Elizabeth cries out with joy. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (Lk. 1:42; this is presently used in a Catholic devotion)

Mary's reply is the beautiful Magnificat (so-called for the first word in the Latin translation). This has sometimes been attributed to Elizabeth rather than to Mary, but not very convincingly. It is based largely on Hannah's

⁷Marcelle Auclair, *Christ's Image* (New York: Tudor, n.d.), pp. 22, 29.

prayer in I Samuel 2:1-10,⁸ in which Mary declares the greatness of God. The Magnificat and Hannah's Song of Praise follow.

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has regarded the low estate
of his handmaiden,
For behold, henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed;
for he who is might has done
great things for me,
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on those
who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has scattered the proud in
the imagination of their hearts,
he has put down the mighty from
their thrones,
and exalted those of low degree;
he has filled the hungry with
good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his
posterity forever. (Lk. 1:39-56)

My heart exults in the Lord;
my strength is exalted in the Lord.
My mouth derides my enemies,
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
There is none holy like the Lord,
there is no one besides thee;
there is no rock like our God.
Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.
Those who were full have hired

⁸*The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1929), p. 1034.

themselves out for bread,
 but those who were hungry have
 ceased to hunger.
 The barren has borne seven,
 but she who has many children
 is forlorn.
 The Lord kills and brings to life;
 he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
 he brings low, he also exalts.
 He raises up the poor from the dust;
 he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
 to make them sit with princes
 and inherit a seat of honor.
 For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
 and on them he has set the world.
 He will guard the feet of his faithful ones;
 but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
 for not by might shall a man prevail.
 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
 against them he will thunder in heaven.
 The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
 he will give strength to his king,
 and exalt the power of his anointed.

The startling thing about these two poems is that they both have the Savior theme. If God is for the oppressed (cf. Exodus 3:7-10) as he sends Moses to Egypt to deliver his people Israel because he has seen their affliction, then we ask what does Mary's Magnificat mean for us? Surely nothing less than that all generations shall call her blessed for her role in the birth of our Redeemer.

The actual birth story of Jesus varies from Matthew's account, for here in Luke we have shepherds who hear the glad tidings rather than the visit of the wise men, and who come to visit Mary, Joseph and the babe in the manger. We get the sense of light as the glory of the Lord shone

around the shepherds when the angel of the Lord appears to tell them "the good news of a great joy which will come to all people." (Lk. 2:10) They came to see Mary and the babe and made known the saying that had been told them concerning the child, "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." (Lk. 2:19) "Born of the Virgin Mary," which is in the early creeds, is the irreducible minimum of all the theories about Mary that have appeared within the history of the Christian tradition.⁹

The work of salvation, Rudolph Bultmann tells us, as a whole consists of Christ's incarnation, his passion and death, his resurrection and exaltation, but sometimes one thing, sometimes another may be mentioned or emphasized. By and large, however, the chief emphasis lies upon his passion and death.¹⁰

T. S. Eliot became very interested in the doctrines of Incarnation and it was a pivotal point in his thought. He expresses it this way:

But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint--
 . . .
 or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,

⁹Pelikan, *op. cit.*, p. 991.

¹⁰Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), II, 157.

Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is
Incarnation.¹¹

In John's Gospel we have an account of Mary at the wedding feast in Cana, and her presence at the Crucifixion of Jesus. Dr. Ernest Colwell points out that the most important source for the author of the Fourth Gospel was the Synoptic Gospels but that the author not only drops material and adds material but that he transforms it. He points out that in John there is "no genealogy, no birth of Jesus, no birth of the Baptist, no wise men or shepherds, or flight to Egypt, no slaughter of the innocents, no visit of the boy Jesus to the temple."¹² The scene of the wedding feast in Cana and the presence of Mary at the Crucifixion are among the additions.

Eric Lane Titus says that John's Gospel "may be characterized as an artistic literary creation based on earlier tradition and intended to set forth God's revelation in Jesus Christ."¹³

Bultmann believes that the Cana wedding account

¹¹T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," in his *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943), p. 27.

¹²Ernest Cadman Colwell, *John Defends the Gospel* (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1936), pp. 7-14.

¹³Eric Lane Titus, *Essentials of New Testament Study* (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), p. 201.

in John 2:10-12 is from a miracle source that the author of John used. He says as far as the form is concerned, we have a typical miracle story. Verses 1-2 give the setting, vv. 3-5 the preparation of the miracle, told to create a certain tension as is typical of the miracle genre; vv. 6-8 the miracle itself, without describing the actual process, and the conclusion in verses 9-10 which emphasizes the παράδοξον of the miracle. Verse 11 tells the meaning of the event which is to reveal the δόξα of Jesus. Mary's role is in the preparation of the miracle, and when the wine runs out at the wedding feast Mary brings it to Jesus' notice. She does this with the aim of getting him to perform a miracle. This is done here by making Jesus first refuse which adds tension to the story.¹⁴ (Plate X)

Bultmann says the surprising thing here is the form of address, and that the refusal is a rough one: "Woman, what have I to do with you?" One expects, "Mother," not "Woman," but Bultmann adds that even though this is not disrespectful or scornful, it does set a peculiar distance between Jesus and his mother. He must listen to another voice, not to human voice, for "My hour has not yet come." (v. 4) The preparation is concluded in the next verse as the mother has understood her son, and all she can do now

¹⁴Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 113-119.



PLATE X

THE MARRIAGE IN CANA

Gerard David (c. 1450-1523)

is to await his command and so she directs the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them.¹⁵

At the conclusion of the miracle of the Epiphany, the first of Jesus' miracles, verse 12 tells us that after this Jesus went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers, and his disciples and stayed there for a few days. Bultmann comments that this verse in the source led on to another narrative.¹⁶

The story of Mary and the Beloved Disciple at the Cross is told in John 19:25-27. Bultmann points out that according to the Synoptics, the Mother of Jesus does not appear at the cross, for in them she does not belong to the group of Jesus' followers at all. Mark 3:31-35 parallels this rather than suggests the contrary. While Acts 1:14 includes Mary as belonging to the first community, along with the brothers of Jesus, there is no relationship to the "Beloved Disciple" mentioned in this verse.¹⁷

The Evangelist's interest in women as witness to the crucifixion centers only on Mary, and for the first time in this context she is now mentioned with the "Beloved Disciple."¹⁸ "'Woman behold your son!' 'Behold your mother!'" And from that hour the disciple took her to his home." (vv. 26-27)

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 672.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

Bultmann's interpretation of this scene is that it has a symbolic meaning for in the face of the Synoptic tradition which has no Mary at the cross, it can make no claim to historicity.

The mother of Jesus, who tarries by the cross, represents Jewish Christianity, that overcomes the offense of the cross. The beloved disciple represents Gentile Christianity, which is charged to honour the former as its mother from whom it has come, even as Jewish Christianity is charged to recognise itself as 'at home' within Gentile Christianity, i.e. included in one great fellowship of the Church. And these directions sound out from the cross: i.e. they are commands of the 'exalted' Jesus. Their meaning is the same as his words in the prayer, 17:20f., the request for the first disciples and for those who come to faith through their word: 'that they all may be one.'¹⁹

Bultmann rejects the idea of Hirsch that the Mother of Jesus represents the Church as an impossible assertion; the Church, Bultmann says, is on the contrary the Mother of believers and the Bride of Christ! He adds that Dodd (428.2) rejects any symbolizing of the scene.²⁰

This scene could certainly be interpreted as evidence of the value that Jesus put upon tenderness in human relationships (cf. Plate IX, p. 33).

In summary, we have discussed Mary's relationship to God in the Annunciation and the Incarnation. The birth accounts of Matthew and Luke have been compared. Mary's relationship to Jesus in the account of the turning of the water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana has been

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 673

²⁰*Ibid.*, n. 4.

discussed; and, we have closed our investigation of the role of Mary with the scene of her at the cross at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. There could be the symbolic interpretation as Bultmann gives or the matter-of-fact human relations to filial tenderness that shows Jesus' value for his mother in this scene depending upon our hermeneutics. How this scene has been developed by Catholic and Protestant theologians will be developed later.

Since the state of New Testament hermeneutics is at the present time in a state of change and different interpretations have been made by different theologians in the Protestant faith, as well as a definite difference in the interpretation between Protestant and Catholic theologians, for the purpose of developing out theme of tenderness, let us recall some of the dialogue cited from Luke's and John's Gospels.

Gabriel to Mary: "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" (Lk. 1:28)
 "you will. . . bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." (Lk. 1:31)
 "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," (Lk. 1:35)

Mary's reply: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Lk. 1:38)

Elizabeth: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (Lk. 1:42)

Mary: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;" (Lk. 1:48)

Jesus: "Behold, your mother!" (Said to John from the Cross.) (Jn. 19:27)

These few statements are enough to point out what

the authors of these Gospels intended to say about Mary, and these few assertions are quite enough for us to construct a theology of tenderness. Mary has been chosen by God to be the bearer of our salvation in a human form. The Lord is with her in a unique way through the Holy Spirit. A new order of creation has come about. Eternity enters time through Mary in the Incarnation. Mary is blessed because she accepts with grace her role in bringing our Lord to birth and to earth. Jesus does not forget his mother at the hour of his death, but asks that she be cared for. Jesus is both the Son of God and Mary's son.

CHAPTER IV

MARY IN EARLY NON-CANONICAL LITERATURE:

THE PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES

The Protevangelium of James is the most important document outside of the New Testament that we have concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus. This apocryphal gospel written in the second century, probably not earlier than 150 A.D., and which leans heavily on the Biblical accounts of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, combines legend with these, and also has knowledge of the Old Testament sources of the birth of Isaac and the birth of Samuel.

Oscar Cullmann, whose translation the writer is following, says that the importance of this gospel cannot be overemphasized for all the themes of later Mariology are to be found here, at least implicitly.

all the themes of future Mariology are propounded: although it is true, the 'Immaculate conception' of the mother of Jesus is not taught, her miraculous birth is recorded. The virgin birth, in contrast to the more unbiased views of Tertullian and Origen, is already understood as implying Mary's perpetual virginity. This is harmonized with the existence of brothers of Jesus in the primitive tradition by postulating a previous marriage for Joseph. . . .¹

The writer believes the beginnings of the doctrine

¹Oscar Cullmann, "The Protevangelium of James," in *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), I, 373.

of the "immaculate conception," also the "Virgin Birth" and even traces of the doctrine of "Queen of Heaven" can be traced; but a better apocryphal source of the "Assumption of Mary" is *Transitus Mariae* (1902).

There is also the additional question as to what extent the Roman Catholic Church has followed these apocryphal sources for the proclamation of their dogma.

Hilda Graef, writing from the Roman Catholic viewpoint, says:

In the eastern view, which goes back to the apocryphal Gospel of James, they (the brothers of Jesus) are regarded as sons of St. Joseph by a former marriage, whereas the Western Church has followed the opinion of the great biblical scholar St. Jerome (420) who vigorously rejected the 'delirious nonsense of the apocrypha' and pointed out that in scriptural language cousins are frequently called "brothers."²

In speaking of the doctrine of the Assumption, Miss Graef says that "the Church has never accepted apocryphal statements in support of her doctrines."³

But as to devotional and liturgical developments, Miss Graef gives credit to the Gospel of James as being the most influential of the apocryphal writings. After the Council of Ephesus, 431, which declared Mary, *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, there was great interest in the early

²Hilda Graef, *The Devotion to Our Lady* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963), pp. 12-13.

³*Ibid.*, p. 92.

life of Mary.⁴

Giovanni Miegge, writing from the Protestant viewpoint, speaks of the open dogma of the Catholic church, and says we can approach their researches with confidence. He says that not only is the honesty of the Catholic students beyond question, but that the traditional position of finding in the sacred Scriptures the justification of all aspects of Marian dogma, even at the cost of evident forcing of their meaning, has yielded to a more objective consideration.⁵

Cardinal Newman, after his conversion from the Anglican church to the Roman Catholic church, carried with him certain needs for liberty and modernity and he taught "that dogma is a living organism that develops on the lines of its premises and according to its intrinsic dynamic."⁶

Miegge says that they, the Catholics, no longer try to claim that certain aspects of the Marian doctrine, such as her immaculate conception, her assumption, her participation in the redemption of men, are explicitly affirmed in the New Testament, or in the writings of the earliest fathers. He says the Catholics have turned to the field

⁴*Ibid.* pp. 28-29.

⁵Giovanni Miegge, *The Virgin Mary, The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), pp 19, 22.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 20.

of the Church's dogmatic and liturgical creation,

the field of that popular piety that chooses by its own laws its own objects of worship, and by the spontaneous expression of its devotion creates the substance and designs the necessary lines of the doctrinal development. For such organic development it is enough to have its own point of departure in the New Testament, a geometric point, one would say, without dimensions.⁷

Miegge cites Father Roschini, who is in his eyes perhaps the greatest living specialist in mariology in Italy. In a short popular catechism Roschini outlines the intrinsic laws of development of the Marian system in one primary principle and four secondary ones.

Primary: "The most blessed Mary is the Mother of God and the Mediatrix of man."

1. Principle of singularity.
 2. Principle of propriety.
 3. Principle of eminence.
 4. Principle of analogy or likeness to Christ.⁸
- (Abridged)

Miegge says the church chews slowly, but that it has finally adopted the teachings of Newman and with this we are informed of what the possibilities of the future may be.

J. B. Carol, editor of *Mariology*, gives a quite considerable section over to the study of "Mary in the Apocrypha of the New Testament." Alfred C. Rush, who contributes this section, says the Apocryphal literature is a

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 21-22, quoting from Gabriele M. Roschini, *Chi e Maria? Catechismo Mariano* (Rome: Societa Apostolato Stampo, 1944), pp. 12-14.

most fitting theme, for when its nature is considered as trying to add to the information of the canonical gospels, and while they may not be considered to have historical value, they do add to the tendencies, customs and beliefs of early Christian times. Rush says that they are of importance for the theologian and the historian of dogma, and specifically they are of great value in the study of Mariology.⁹

Dr. Colwell says that while John's Gospel is one that adds and subtracts material and even transforms it from the Synoptics, the Gospel of James is one that supplements them. It cannot be read apart from one of the Gospels and its *raison d'être* is to supplement, to fill in the gaps.¹⁰

Dr. Titus notes that the Gospel of James has come down to us in extensive form in contrast to the fragmentary character of other nonbiblical Gospels. An interest in Mary is extremely marked, she is even miraculously conceived, and such matters of the virgin birth and the perpetual virginity of Mary are of prime importance. Other interests such as the idea that Jesus' brothers were sons of Joseph by a for-

⁹Alfred C. Rush, "Mary in the Apocrypha of the New Testament," in Juniper B. Carol (ed.) *Mariology* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954), pp. 156-162.

¹⁰Ernest Cadman Colwell, *John Defends the Gospel* (Chicago: Willet Clark, 1936), pp. 6-7.

mer marriage, that Jesus was born in a cave, are reflected, as is the radical response of nature to the birth of Jesus¹¹ (cf. Milton's "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity").

For a textual-critical examination of the Protevangelium, we will follow Cullmann.

A. THE TEXTS AND LITERATURE

From ancient times we possess only one manuscript, the first known through the Bodmer papyrus collection, Papyrus Bodmer V, edited in 1958 by M. Testuz. Following the judgment of papyrologists on the palaeographical evidence, the editor assigns it to the third century. The text, however, testifies to a very advanced stage of secondary expansions and sometimes also of secondary readings. The older critical editions. . . differ from each other radically in details. Nearly all of them are later than the 10th century; a fragment of the 5th and 6th century published by P. Grenfell in 1896 contains a scarcely better text than the later manuscripts.¹²

B. TITLE AND CONTENTS

Cullmann says that the oldest manuscript (Papyrus Bodmer V) has: "Birth of Mary, Revelation of James," the later Greek manuscripts usually have "Story," "History" or "Account" and then, either with or without mention of James, gives the contents, usually described as "Birth of Saint Mary, Mother of God." Cullmann says that the familiar title "Protevangelium" is not old, that it is to Postel

¹²Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

and Neander that it owes its established position.¹³ We find from the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible that it was first styled Protevangelium of James by its sixteenth-century discoverer, Guillaume Postel, and that under the title of "Gospel of James the Less" it was condemned in the Gelasian Decree.¹⁴

Cullmann says that although it reaches the birth of Jesus and recounts it, it is really an account of the miraculous birth of Mary, the daughter of wealthy Joachim and his wife Anne, of her upbringing in the temple and of her virginity. This virginity is not impaired either by Joseph to whom she is entrusted by lot, or by the birth of Jesus. Chapters 22-24, obviously a later addition, tell of the murder of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.¹⁵

C. AUTHOR AND DATE

The most common view was that the document was written by James, the brother of Jesus, which is implied at the end of the document. Though because the date of this document is ca. A.D. 150, this is not possible. However Cullmann says the fathers were more cautious and

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 371.

¹⁴M. S. Enslin, "Protevangelium of James," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, II, 799.

¹⁵Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

spoke of the author as "a certain James." He adds also that the Decree of Gelasius, which condemns the writing, attributes it to James the younger (James the Less of Mk. 15:40).¹⁶

Cullmann says the book could not have been written before 150 because it presupposes the canonical infancy stories and is not a source for them.¹⁷

D. UNITY OF THE WORK

Cullmann tells us that the various discrepancies, which the manuscripts attempt to harmonize, show that the original work was made up of materials of varying provenance and the attempt was made to harmonize them. He believes the expansions are particularly important, and must have been made early in this work. For instance, the text changes to the first person in 18:2, when Joseph speaks in the first person about the cessation of nature, and this seems to be confirmed now to have been from another work which was combined with the *Protevangelium*, for it is not in the oldest manuscripts. The later manuscripts also have a prayer of Salome, the midwife, and Cullmann says this is entirely secondary. Also the chapters 22-24 about the death of Zacharias have been expanded for Origen, in speaking of the account of the death of Zacharias, gives a different

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

account. Cullmann says whether the central sections 17-21 on the birth of Jesus are a later addition to the real narrative about Mary cannot be decided, for here, at least, there is a closer connection.¹⁸

E. LITERARY STYLE AND THEOLOGICAL CHARACTER

Cullmann feels that the borrowing of legendary materials is quite restrained and in good taste with the exception of the story of the midwife. He says that the whole is impressive of a sober, sincere and poetic mind, with most of the sources from the Old and New Testament, showing the use of the story of Samuel, but that the author knew how to weave them together into an artistic whole, except for the crude and distasteful features for apologetic reasons about the midwife. He says that the "whole work is written for the glorification of Mary." While the work was condemned in the West, the ideal of virginity found great followers in the Eastern church, first especially among the Ebonites, but also among the Greek fathers and in the Syrian, Coptic and Armenian churches.¹⁹

F. THE TEXT²⁰

I. 1. Joachim, a very rich man is introduced in

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 372-373. ¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

²⁰The following text is paraphrased by the writer

this first section as being also a very generous man, for he brings all his gifts for the Lord two-fold, what is in excess is for the whole people, and what he brings for forgiveness of his sins shall be for the Lord for a propitiation for him. The source of this is the "Histories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel." We are won to the giving nature of this man from the beginning.

2. The great day of the Lord drew near and Joachim starts to present his gift first, and is rebuked by Reubel (Reuben) who says it is not fitting for him to offer his gifts first because he has begotten no offspring in Israel.

3. Joachim is sad and goes to look at the record of all the righteous of the twelve tribes of Israel and he cannot find a one who has not raised up offspring in Israel. Even Abraham in his last days is given the child Isaac.

4. And Joachim went to the wilderness and pitched his tent for forty days and forty nights and said he would not go down until the Lord visited him; that prayer would be his food. Here, Cullmann cites the forty days and forty nights reference to Mt. 4:2 (Lk. 4:2) where Jesus goes into the wilderness and is tempted by the Devil and fasts for forty days and forty nights; and the further reference given is to Exod. 24:18, 34:28, wherein we are told that Moses fasted forty days and forty nights when he went up

and includes commentary on Cullmann's translation.

on the Mount Sinai (Horeb) to receive the Ten Commandments. The reference that prayer would be his food and drink is possibly from John 4:34 where Jesus says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

From this 2-4 section, we perceive the great seriousness of the man Joachim and his devoutness as he turns to the Lord in prayer and fasting. His mention of the patriarch Abraham should be noted for in the next section Anna, his wife, makes mention of Sarah who gave birth to Isaac late in life.

II. 1. In the meantime Anna is uttering a twofold lamentation and giving voice to a twofold bewailing: "I will bewail my widowhood, and bewail my childlessness." We are aware of another twofoldness here, just as Joachim's generosity was twofold, so now is Anna's grief twofold.

Cullmann makes no Biblical reference to this bewailing, but the writer recalls a bewailing by Jephthah's daughter when she is to be given in sacrifice to fulfill Jephthah's vow that he would give to the Lord whatsoever that greeted him upon his return home from a victorious battle. That it should be his only daughter who greeted him makes this story one of the real tragedies of the Bible. Jephthah's dutiful daughter says, "Let this thing be done for me: let me along two months, that I may go up and down the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows." (Judges 11:37)

Bultmann makes the comment that this is a true Jewish bewailing--to bewail virginity (cf. idea of Mary's virginity is more Hellenistic).

2. The great day of the Lord drew near and Euthine (Judith), the maidservant of Anna, chides her for humbling herself and tries to give her a headband which the mistress of work gave her. She says she cannot wear it because it has a royal mark on it. (Does this infer that Anna is of royal lineage? Not necessarily.) There is a tussle of words between the maidservant and Anna when the latter refuses the headband saying that a deceiver may have given it to the maid and if she accepts it she would share in their sin. The maid chides Anna that it is the Lord who has shut up her womb. Here Cullmann refers us to I Sam. 1:6, the story of Hannah. Elkanah had two wives, one was Hannah and the other Peninnah, and Peninnah had children and Hannah none. Peninnah "provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb." (I Sam. 1:1,2,6)

4. Anna was very sad but in about the ninth hour she puts off her mourning garments and goes to walk in the garden, having put on her bridal garments. She sees a laurel tree and sits down beneath it and prays much the same prayer from the feminine viewpoint that Joachim had prayed from the masculine one. She prays that her womb might be blessed just as God did bless the womb of Sarah

(our mother Sarah), giving her a son, Isaac.

The Oxford English Annotated Bible tells us that

The story of a formerly barren woman who bears unusual offspring late in life as a special favor from God appears several times in the Bible. Besides Hannah, note Sarah (Gen. 17:16-19), Rebekah (Gen. 25:21-26), Rachel (Gen. 29:31; 30:22-24), the mother of Samson (Jgs 3:2-5), and Elizabeth (Lk. 1:5-17). The unusual birth was thought to be symbolic of the importance of the person in later life. (Note on I Sam. 1:1-28)

The reference Cullmann gives us is to Gen. 21:1-3, which is the story of the actual birth of Isaac. The Gen. 17:16-19 reference is when Sarah is told she will be given a son and be the mother of all nations, and she laughs in derision because she is old.

III. 1. Anna sighs towards heaven and sits down under a laurel tree. The laurel tree has connotations of folklore or mythology. She sees a nest of sparrows and makes a beautiful lament over her barrenness. Even the birds of heaven and the dumb beasts and the fish in the waters are fertile, but woe to her, who begot her to be a reproach to all Israel? The meter is rythmical and the "Woe" is repeated in different form six times. It is a beautiful poem, ending "even this earth brings forth its fruit in its season and praises thee, O Lord."

We are referred here to Ps. 1:3.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

IV. 1. Anna's prayer brings forth a response, for an angel of the Lord appears to her, and tells her she will bear a child. In her joy she promises that she will bring the child as a gift to the Lord and that "it" will serve him all the days of its life. We have six biblical references in this short paragraph according to Cullmann. They are:

" . . . behold an angel of the Lord came to her"

(Lk. 2:9; Acts 12:7)

Lk. 2:9 refers to the angel appearing to the shepherds as they were watching their sheep when Jesus was born.

Acts 12:7 tells of when Peter is in prison put there by Herod the king after he had killed James 'the brother of John with the sword' (v.2) and sleeping between two prisoners, he is wakened by an Angel of the Lord and 'a light shined in the prison.'

"Anna, Anna, the Lord has heard your prayer. You shall conceive and bear," . . . We are referred to Lk. 1:13; Gen. 16:11; Jud. 13:3,5,7.

Lk. 1:13 - An angel appears to Zacharias and tells him not to fear that his prayer has been heard and that his wife Elizabeth will bear a son.

Gen. 16:11 tells how the angel of the Lord appears to Hagar in the wilderness and tells her that the Lord had heard her affliction and that she will bear a son Ishmael.

Jud. 13:3,5,7 - To the wife of Manoah the angel of the Lord appears and tells her that she will bear a son who will deliver the people from the Philistines, namely a Nazarite, Samson.

"And Anna said: 'As the Lord my God lives.'" This phrase is used five times in this short document and is

used much as a vow for emphasis. We are referred to:

Jud. 8:19 cf. I Sam 1:26. Gideon uses this phrase when he is told that the men slain at Tabor were much like him, and his reply is 'as the Lord lives' he would not slay them had they saved his brothers.

cf. I Sam. 1:26 which tells the story of when Hannah brings Samuel to the temple to Eli the priest who had heard her praying before in the sanctuary for a child, and had blessed her. She says now, "Oh, my lord, as your soul lives,".

Anna had promised that if she bore a child, male or female, she would "bring it as a gift to the Lord my God."

I Sam. 1:11 - This is Hannah's bitter prayer when she asks for a child and makes the promise or better called a vow that 'then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, . . .'

". . . and it shall serve him all the days of its life."

Cf. I Sam. 2:11; 1:28 - which tell of how the child (Samuel) ministers unto the Lord before the priest, Eli; and again of how Eli's father had been chosen to be priest out of all the tribes of Israel.

We see from the above how heavily the author of the Protevangelium has leaned upon the story of Eli and Hannah and Samuel. This and the later reference we will have of the weaving of cloth for the temple, makes the writer believe that the author was either a priest himself, or at least well acquainted with the priestly traditions.

IV. 2 - v. 1, tells of the rejoicing of Joachim and Anna and the gifts of sacrifice that Joachim makes.

V. 2. Gives the actual birth of Mary and when Anna

is told that she has brought forth a female, she says: "My soul is magnified this day." Cf. Luke 1:46: these are words of the same meaning that Mary used when Jesus was born--"And Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.'"

VI. 1 Takes us into the early life of Mary. When she is six months old her mother Anna stood her on the ground and she walked (twice) seven steps. From then on Anna decides she shall not walk anymore on the ground until she takes her to the temple.

And she made a sanctuary in her bedchamber, and did not permit anything common or unclean to pass through it. And she summoned the undefiled daughters of the Hebrews, and they cared for her amusement.

We see the "filling in" of the life of Mary beginning to grow, just as we do in the apocryphal stories about the youth of Jesus.

VI. 2. On the child's first birthday, Joachim makes a great feast. Anna sings songs of praise to the Lord, just as Hannah sang her sons of praise, and Mary her Magnificat. (All patterned on I Samuel 2.)

The main point of all this is to show how tenderly Mary is raised, with nothing common touching her feet or nothing unclean touches her as she is kept in the sanctuary of her mother's bedchamber. (Who would ever think of calling a bedchamber a sanctuary unless one were thinking of the temple as a sanctuary?) That Mary is a very unusual child we gather from the fact she walks at six months.

A chronological report of Mary is now given. On her first birthday a great celebration is made by Joachim, and "the chief priests and the priests and the scribes and the elders and the whole people of Israel" are invited. (6:2) Joachim asks for the priests' blessing on the child, and the chief priests blessed her saying: "O God of the heavenly heights, look upon this child and bless her with a supreme and unsurpassable blessing." Then Anna carries her back to the sanctuary of her bedchamber. (6:2)

When the child is two years old, Joachim thinks they should take the child to the temple and keep the promise they made to the Lord, lest the Lord send some evil upon them. Anna says wait another year so Mary will not long for her father and mother.

When the child was three years old they do take her to the temple. Joachim takes the precaution to have the undefiled daughters of the Hebrews each take a lamp and keep them burning so that Mary will not want to turn back. They take her to the priest and he takes her and blesses and kisses her. "The Lord has magnified your name among all generations; because of you the Lord at the end of the days will manifest his redemption to the children of Israel." (7:2) The priest places her on the third step of the altar and Mary danced for joy and the whole house of Israel loved her and the Lord put grace upon her. Her parents are surprised that she turns not back.

This presentation at the temple later becomes the source of the Feast of Presentation of Mary, and has been captured in the painting of Titian, "Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple," Academia delle Belle Arti, Venice. This painting shows Mary as a child dressed in a gown of blue with long titian hair with a halo of light surrounding her, standing or almost dancing on the third step of the altar, while the high priest dressed in apron with bells and breastplate with twelve symbols, a frontlet and colorful dress, raises his hands in blessing.²¹ (Plate XI)

According to the *Protevangelium*, at age twelve Mary presents a problem for, having come of age, they were afraid she might pollute the temple of the Lord. So the high priest took the vestment with the twelve bells and went into the Holy of Holies and prayed to God to be told what to do with her. An angel of the Lord suddenly stands before the priest and calling him Zacharias tells him to go out and assemble all the widowers of the people, each one to bring a rod, and whomsoever the Lord shall give a sign to, he shall have the girl for a wife. No sign happens until the last one is returned, which is Joseph's, and out of his rod flies a dove and lights on his head. Henceforth he is to take Mary under his care. Joseph is not so

²¹Titian, "Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple" in Jean Guitton, *The Madonna* (New York: Tudor, n.d.), p. 19.



PLATE XI

PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN IN THE TEMPLE (Detail)

by Titian

delighted with the prospect of taking on this child since he is old and already has sons by a former marriage. He is afraid he will become the laughing stock of Israel. (This ready-made family of Joseph's is later used by apologists to prove Mary's perpetual virginity and to deny the brothers of Jesus' mentioned in the Bible.)

The priests caution Joseph what may happen to him if he does not obey and remind him of what happened to Korah and the others because of their rebellion. In fear, Joseph takes Mary to his home but leaves immediately to go away and "build my buildings."

The priests hold a council and decide to make a veil for the temple of the Lord. They call to do this weaving the pure virgins of the tribe of David and the priest remembers the child Mary, "that she was of the tribe of David and was pure before God." (10:1) The virgins were brought into the temple and lots were cast to see who would weave "the gold, the amiant, the linen, the silk, the Hyacinth-blue, the scarlet and the purple." To Mary falls the lot of weaving the purple and the scarlet. These are the royal colors. The Psuedo-Matthew Gospel, a later document which is based on the Protevangelium and the Gospel of Thomas (infancy story), makes much of these royal colors and forms a royal link with the title, "Queen of Heaven."²²

²²Juniper B. Carol, *Mariology* (Milwaukee: Bruce,

As Mary is weaving the purple and the scarlet in Joseph's home, she takes a pitcher and goes forth to draw water only to hear a voice address her. She looks right and left but cannot locate the voice, so frightened she returns to the drawing out of the purple threads. The angel of the Lord appears to her and tells her she will bear a son and that his name will be Jesus for he will save the people from their sins. And Mary said: "Behold, [I am] the handmaid of the Lord before him: be it to me according to your word." (Cf. Lk. 1:38) In this 11th section, the Protevangelium uses words from both Matthew's and Luke's text of the Annunciation.

Mary finishes her weaving, takes it to the temple to the priest who blesses her and then she starts on her journey to see her kinswoman, Elizabeth. Mary was sixteen years old, and she is surprised at Elizabeth's greeting for "Mary forgot the mysteries which the [arch] angel Gabriel had told her, and raised a sigh towards heaven and said: 'Whom am I, Lord, that all women [generations] of earth count me blessed?'" (12:2) Mary stays with Elizabeth for three months, and another very human trait comes out as Mary was afraid as each day her womb grew, so she returns to her home and hides herself.

Joseph arrives home when Mary is in her sixth month

1955), I, 176.

and he is shocked and distraught. Mary claims her innocence and Joseph knows not what to do about her until he is advised in a dream by an angel of the Lord that Mary has conceived by the Holy Spirit and will bear a son, and that he is to call his name Jesus; for he shall save the people from their sins. (Following the Gospel tradition.)

Added to this, in the *Protevangelium* a priest comes in, sees Mary's condition and thinks that Joseph has "stolen marriage with her." The officers go and bring Mary before the court and question her but she insists on her innocence. The high priest also questions Joseph. They are given the test of "bitter waters" (Num. 5:11-31) but both return from the hills whole, and the priest says since the Lord has not made manifest their sins neither does he condemn them.

The next scene shows Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem in answer to the decree from king Augustus that all inhabitants of Bethlehem in Judaea should be enrolled. Joseph worries about how he shall explain his relationship to Mary. Mary, he thinks, is acting quite strangely, for one time when he looks around she is laughing and the next time she is sad. Joseph questions her and her reply is that she sees two people within her. Cullmann gives us the reference to Rebecca when she bears the twins Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25:23), but Pseudo-Matthew elaborates with an explanation that Mary sees two nations, the Gentiles and the Jews.

Mary tells Joseph to take her down for the child presses to come out. He finds a cave (not a manger as in the Synoptics), and leaves his sons to watch over her while he goes out to seek a midwife. Here the wonder of nature standing still is interpolated:

Now I, Joseph, was walking, and (yet) I did not walk,
 and I looked up to the air and saw the air in amazement.
 And I looked up at the vault of heaven, and saw it
 standing still and the birds of the heaven motionless.
 And I looked at the earth, and saw a dish placed there
 and
 workmen lying around it, with their hands in the dish.
 But those who chewed did not chew, and those who lifted
 up anything lifted up nothing, and those who put some-
 thing
 to their mouth put nothing (to their mouth), but all had
 their faces turned upwards. And behold, sheep were
 being driven
 and (yet) they did not come forward, but stood still;
 and
 the shepherd raised his hand to strike them with his
 staff; but his
 hand remained up. And I looked and they did not drink.
 And
 then all at once everything went on its course (again).
 (18:2) (Cf. Milton, "Ode on the Morning of Christ's
 Nativity")

After this beautiful portent we can expect any miracle to happen, but instead we are faced with the midwife. She goes into the cave with Joseph and the birth of Jesus happens like this: A dark (bright) cloud overshadowed the cave, "and immediately the cloud disappeared from the cave and a great light appeared, so that our eyes could not bear it." "A short time afterwards that light withdrew until the child appeared, and it went and took the breast of its mother Mary." (19:2) And the midwife said:

"My soul is magnified to-day, for my eyes have seen wonderful things; for salvation is born to Israel." (19:2)

And the midwife came out of the cave and Salome met her. And she said to her: "Salome, Salome, I have a new sight to tell you; a virgin has brought forth, a thing which her nature does not allow." But Salome says she will not believe unless she tests her condition, "I will not believe that a virgin has brought forth." (19:3)

Salome goes in to make her test (thus having the testimony of two midwives) but for her wickedness and unbelief her hand falls away from her as consumed by fire. Salome prays to the Lord and he tells her that her hand will be restored if she touches the child. This she does and is healed and goes out of the cave saying she will worship him for a great king has been born to Israel. (20:1-3) (cf. Plate XII)

This is followed by the wise-men story of Matthew with variations, (21) and the search of Herod and his order for the slaughter of the children. In this later addition (22-24), Herod has Zacharias slain in the forecourt of the temple and his blood congealed as stone beside the altar.

The *Protevangelium* closes with this inscription (25:1):

Now I, James, who wrote this history, when a tumult arose in Jerusalem on the death of Herod, withdrew into the wilderness until the tumult in Jerusalem

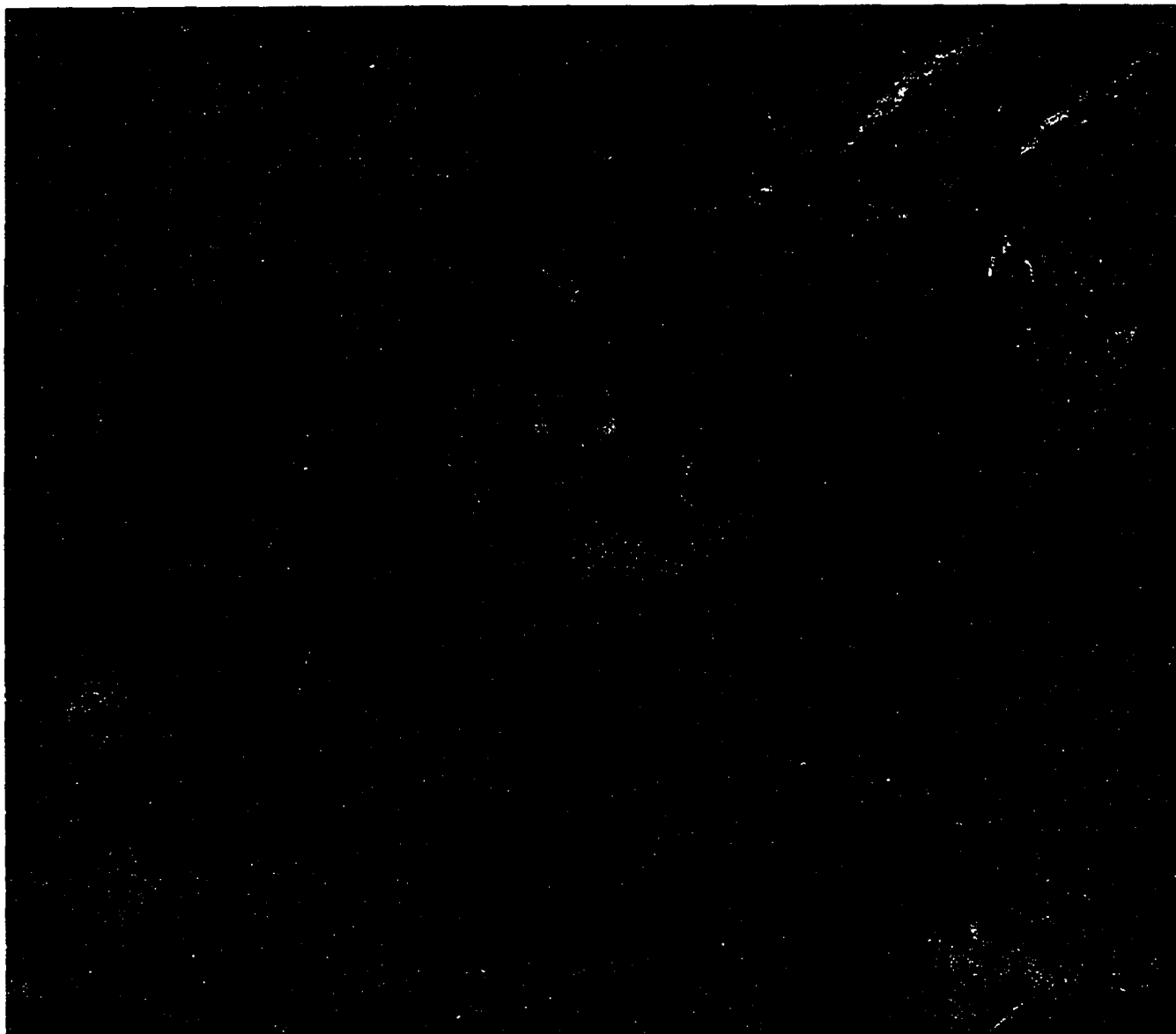


PLATE XII

NATIVITY

Painting on Wood, Siennese School, 13th Century

ceased. And I will praise the Lord who gave me the wisdom to write this history. Grace shall be with all those who fear the Lord.

(Nativity of Mary. Apocalypse of James. Peace be to him who wrote and to him who reads!)

There is a "filling in" of the life of Mary in this document. She is raised in such a tender way that her feet may not even touch the ground before she is presented at the temple. Her unusual birth to Anna and Jochaim lays the ground for the "Immaculate conception" dogma. The two midwives who attend her at the miraculous birth of Jesus are necessarily witnesses to Mary's virginity.

The birth itself, so flooded with light, and the portent of nature standing still add the miraculous to the legend. But we are taken back in time in this legend into the importance of Mary's life itself, as being consecrated to the Lord and spending her time weaving the scarlet and the purple in the temple.

We shall now trace the dogmas that have arisen in the Roman Catholic tradition.

CHAPTER V

MARY IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A. BEFORE VATICAN II

For the source of our study of the dogma and teaching of the Catholic Church on Mary, we will use Juniper B. Carol's *Mariology*, since it has the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* of the Church.

In the chapter written on "Mary in the Documents of the Magisterium," by Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., S.T.D., the Magisterium and the function of the Deposit of Faith is explained.

"The term Magisterium means the right and office of teaching truths revealed by God with that supreme authority to which all must assent."¹ This magisterium term may be used in two ways: first, for the power of teaching; second, for the persons themselves who possess the teaching authority. Carroll in his article uses only what the Papal magisterium has taught about Mary, which includes the decisions of ecumenical councils, i.e., general assemblies to which all the bishops of the world are invited, with the Pope

¹Eamon R. Carroll, "Mary in the Documents of the Magisterium," in Juniper B. Carol (ed.) *Mariology* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1955), I, 2.

either calling or at least approving the assembly. This power comes from Christ for He was not only Priest and King, He was also the divine Teacher and He conferred all three powers on His Church.

Another necessary distinction, Carroll says, is between the solemn magisterium and the ordinary magisterium. Solemn magisterium refers to the definitions given by General Councils in union with the Pope, or by the Pope alone when he speaks *ex cathedra*. This means that when the Pope speaks "from the chair," (*ex cathedra*) that he proposes a doctrine of faith or morals to be believed by the universal Church. If the Holy Father declares a certain doctrine is a revealed truth, as in 1950 about the Assumption, the truth is technically known thereafter as a dogma, and the Pope's action, a dogmatic definition. "In such *excathedra* definitions he is infallible; the Holy Ghost protects him from error."²

The ordinary magisterium includes the teaching of the Papal encyclicals, of the ordinary documents of the Congregations (the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome) and of the body of bishops. Even before the Assumption was declared dogma, it was already a matter of faith with the ordinary magisterium, but the definition put it beyond doubt and discussion according to the Roman Catholic Church.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

The popes issue many kinds of documents: some are Apostolic Constitutions (*Munificentissimus Deus*, for example), some are encyclicals addressed to the universal Church, some are radio messages to particular places or to the whole world. Others are letters to bishops and superiors of religious orders. The means of modern communications bring the Pope's words to all the world and often at the time they are spoken.³

The phrase, "Deposit of Faith" (*depositum fidei*), or simply the Deposit, Carroll says, means public Revelation, complete and entire, and intended for all men as it is contained in the Holy Scripture and in divine and apostolic tradition. This Deposit was closed with the death of the last Apostle, and the Church, declared Pius XI "never adds anything to the sum of truths which are contained at least implicitly in the revealed deposit which it has received from God."⁴ But Carroll adds the Church is a living dynamic thing and so the unchanging Deposit does not prevent a real progress in understanding by individuals and the whole Church. This he calls development of doctrine and adds that Newman describes it as, "What the Church once had she never has lost. . . . She has not changed possessions, but accumulated them." Newman says that, "Even centuries might pass without the formal expression of a truth

³*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

which had been all along, the secret life of millions of souls."⁵ At length, it may be declared part of revealed truth, and so declared either by dogmatic definition or by the ordinary magisterium.

Carroll discusses "Mary in the Documents of the Magisterium" in the following order:

- I. Mother of God
 - A. Creeds
 - B. Council of Ephesus
 - C. After Ephesus
 - D. *Lux veritatis*
- II. Ever Virgin
- III. Full of Grace
- IV. Immaculate
- V. Assumed into Heaven
- VI. Mediatrix with the Mediator
 - A. Mediation in General
 - B. Coredeptrix
 - C. Dispensatrix
- VII. Spiritual Mother
- VIII. Queen

We shall follow Carroll's outline below.

Mother of God

The present Apostle's Creed is not earlier than the sixth century, but there is an ancient Roman Creed which appears at the end of the second century. Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, c. 215, quotes this question from the Roman Rite of Baptism: "Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary. . .?"

⁵*Ibid.*

The first symbol, that of Rufinus, listed in the *Enchiridion Symbolorum* was in the Old Roman Creed form:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus His only Son, Our Lord, who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. . . .

The Nicean Symbol, 325, does not directly refer to the Virgin Mary, although it says, in defending the Second Person of the Trinity that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God "for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose on the third day. . . ."6

The Apostle's Creed which the Protestants share with Roman Catholics (as well as the Nicene Creed) is as follows:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, . . .7

The Nicene Creed defended the divinity of Christ, while the first Council of Constantinople, 381, defended the existence of the human soul in Christ against Apollinarius, who said that the Word took the place of the soul. Its creed said that the Son of God "was made flesh by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." Neither at Nicea nor at Constantinople was there attack upon Mary, but the contro-

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁷*The Worshipbook*, Services, Prepared by the Joint Committee on Worship for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., United Presbyterian Church

versy that raged between Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and St. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, centered on the term *Theotokos* (Mother of God). It was no mere quarrel about words for "Mother of God" was refused to the Virgin Mary on the basis that there were two distinct persons in Christ--one God the Word, the other Jesus--and that they were united only by a moral union. Thus, "Mary was said to be the mother of the man Jesus, but not of the other Person, God."⁸

But Cyril openly challenged Nestorius in 429 and informed Pope St. Celestine of this. At the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, 431, convened with the Pope's permission, Cyril presided. Cyril's letter to Nestorius, 430, was read out and approved and Nestorius was condemned.

Nor was He first born of the holy Virgin, as an ordinary man, in such a way that the Word only afterwards descended upon Him; rather was He united [with flesh] in the womb itself, and thus is said to have undergone birth according to the flesh, inasmuch as He makes His own birth of His own flesh. . . . For this reason [the Holy Fathers] have boldly proclaimed the holy Virgin Theotokos.⁹

Pope Celestine declared this the true faith and binding on all.

This did not really settle the controversy between

in the U.S.A. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), frontspiece.

⁸Carroll, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 7.

Antioch and Alexandria and the battle sides went back and forth until Pope Leo I wrote his famous letter of June, 449, usually called the *Tome*. The great pope set forth the view which the west had entertained since the time of Tertullian, that in Christ were two full and complete natures, which "without detracting from the properties of either nature and substance, came together in one person." The essential part of his letter became the Creed of Chalcedon, 451, and it includes the words, "born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [Theotokos], according to the manhood; . . . in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably. . . ." ¹⁰

Lux veritatis, proclaimed by Pius XI encyclical commemorating the anniversary of Ephesus, December 25, 1931, reviews the history of the events at Ephesus and the authoritative position of the Roman Primacy recognized on that occasion.

The central dogma of the Incarnation--that Christ is true God and true man, the divine and human natures existing unconfused in the hypostatis union (the union of the one divine Person with the human nature)--is explained. The divine Maternity is shown as the corollary of the Christological doctrine. From this truth the Pope derives also the belief that Mary is our spiritual mother. ¹¹

To commemorate the Ephesian anniversary, Pius XI restored the mosaic of the Theotokos in St. Mary Major and declared

¹⁰Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 136-139.

¹¹Carroll, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

the feast day of the Divine Maternity as November 21.

The dogma of Theotokos not only shows how the Catholic Church works, it is probably the first and the most important decision made for its Mariology.

Ever Virgin

There was long discussion about the "Ever Virgin" belief before it became dogma at the first Lateran Council, held in 649 under Pope St. Martin I. In 681, the Sixth Ecumenical Council, accepted the anon of the Lateran on Mary's virginity without question. There was agreement by most that Mary was virgin "in birth" according to the New Testament and the Apostle's Creed. But that she was virgin not only before birth, in birth, and after birth (*ante partum, in partu, post partum*), has been debated through the years, from Jerome to Luther (who were defenders of the doctrine). In the New Testament, the words "until" (Mt. 1:25) and "before" (Mt. 1:18) and "first born" (Lk. 2:7) suggest that Mary must have borne further children according to the opponents, while the defenders say that by parallel, a man who "died before repenting his sins," did not necessarily repent afterwards. The other biblical problem was the "brothers" mentioned in I Cor. 9:15 and Gal. 1:19 and several times in the Gospels and in Acts. Defenders of the perpetual virginity have explained these as "kinsman" or as children of Joseph by another previous marriage (*Protevan-*

gelium). Partly because of these problems, the "Ever Virgin" has not received support as unanimously as has the doctrine of the virginal conception or the title "Mother of God."¹²

Full of Grace

Carroll tells us that once the divine Maternity and the perpetual virginity of Mary had been proposed by the teaching authority of the Church as true doctrine, that the way was open for further development in Mariology. This is especially true after Chalcedon, which had emphasized the importance of Mary in the doctrinal defense of the true flesh and the full humanity of Christ. Christian writers were inspired to write of the tender love that Mary had for the Son truly born of her very substance. Belief in Mary's virginity led to belief in her holiness. Mary's freedom from personal sin, or being "Full of Grace" has never been defined, but it is nevertheless an article of faith, as Trent states--"as the Church holds."¹³

Immaculate

The "Immaculate Conception" was defined by Pope

¹²Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, "Mary," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1970), XIV, 991.

¹³Carroll, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-17.

Pius IX on December 8, 1854, in the presence of 200 cardinals, archbishops and bishops. The Holy Father invoked the Holy Spirit and read these words:

. . . We, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by Our Own, declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her Conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the omnipotent God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore is to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.¹⁴

Carroll adds that the rest of *Ineffabilis Deus*, the document of the definition, makes a worthy setting for dogmatic definition. He cites the development of belief in the sinless conception of Mary from "the traditional interpretation of Sacred Scripture, especially of the *Protevangelium* (Gen. 3:15); the greetings of Gabriel and Elizabeth (Lk. 1:28,42); the evidence of the liturgy; and finally the proximate preparation when the one voice clergy and faithful entreated the Pope to define with his supreme judgment the Immaculate Conception. The bishops had been heard, indeed their advice had been first sought, but the final act was the Pope's alone.¹⁵

From the above, we can conclude that the *Protevangelium*, the apocryphal legend discussed in Chapter IV, had been used as a part of the basis for this dogma.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 22-23. ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 23.

Assumed into Heaven

"The Assumption," was made dogma on November 1, 1950, by Pope Pius XII, in his office as supreme teacher of the universal Church solemnly defined:

. . . We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma; that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.¹⁶

This doctrine met with mixed reactions from Protestants, a subject which will be discussed later.

Rubens presents an interpretation of this dogma in art form. (Plate XIII) Jennifer Fletcher comments that when one studies a Rubens' Madonna ascending to Heaven, the picture imparts a sense of Rubens at work still making it. The movement, she says, prevents contemplation and it is hard to get lost in the event; for, with Rubens, one is always aware of Art. This is intentional for he was trying to paint a "Fine Art" Assumption which reminds one of other great Assumptions by Titian and Annibale Carracci. "It is not just a picture of the Virgin going up to heaven, a brilliant illusion of a momentary revelation. . . . It is not easy to disentangle the glory of Rubens from the glory of God."¹⁷

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁷Jennifer Fletcher, *Peter Paul Rubens* (London:

PLATE XIII

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN

Rubens, 1611-15



Mediatrix with the Mediator

In addition to the above dogmas that have been made binding upon Roman Catholics, there are in the process other beliefs about Mary as Mediatrix with the Mediator. Just as with the other beliefs that have already been made dogma, these will be subject to a period of beginnings of the belief, a period of discussion where it is thrown open to the bishops, cardinals, and others, and then will come the final decisions (if there are any) from Rome.

A mediator is one who stands in the middle and unites those who are opposed. As Paul writes: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. . . ." (I Tim. 2:5-6)

At this point, Carroll asks: "Where then, is there place for another Mediator. In what sense is the Mother of Christ associated with her Son in His work of mediation? . . . What has the magisterium said on these topics?"¹⁸

Newman showed in the writings of St. Justin (d. 165) and St. Irenaeus (d. 200) and Tertullian (d. 240), that just as Christ was called the new Adam, that Mary should be called the "new Eve." For just as Adam had

Phaidon Press, 1968), pp. 6, 7.

¹⁸Carroll, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

brought original sin into the world, and Eve had an intimate personal share in "that awful transaction," (says Newman) yet even at the hour of punishment, God promised a Redeemer. Here is cited Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (King James) This Catholics take to mean the Virgin Mary.¹⁹ (Recent exegetes have translated the "it" as "he": see RSV).

Newman thought that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was an interference with the more primitive doctrine of Mary as the Second Eve which he held to be more important. "Death by Eve, life by Mary," Newman said. A common term to describe Mary's participation in Christ's redemptive work is "Coredemptrix." This comes about not only by the above, but because Mary suffered with Christ on the cross, offering him up as Victim on the altar at the appointed time. (Pius X in *Ad diem illum*) Those who defend the Coredemption in the strict sense appeal to this but its adversaries, a small but strong minority, interpret the same documents differently:

. . . The most holy Mother of God had not only the honor of 'having' given the substance of her flesh to the only begotten Son of God, who was to be born of the human race,' whereby a victim was prepared for man's salvation, but she was also entrusted with the task of

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 34.

tending and nourishing this Victim and even of offering it on the altar at the appointed time.²⁰

Leo XIII wrote that Mary was a "co-worker with Christ in His expiation for mankind," and that on Calvary "she offered up her Son to the divine justice dying with Him in her heart."²¹

Benedict XV said it this way:

Thus, she [Mary] suffered and all but died along with her Son suffering and dying; thus, for the salvation of men she abdicated the rights of a mother toward her Son, and insofar as it was hers to do, she immolated the Son to placate God's justice, so that she herself may justly be said to have redeemed together with Christ the human race.²²

In addition to the term "Coredemptrix," there is also that of "Dispensatrix." Mary dispenses all the graces. On the anniversary of St. Bernard's death, Pius XII repeats the great Marian writer's phrase on Our Lady's Mediation: "It is the will of God that we should have nothing which has not passed through the hands of Mary."²³ There are many more of these extravagant phrases but suffice it to say this illustrates the general tone.

Spiritual Mother

The doctrine of "Spiritual Mother" has never been solemnly proclaimed by the magisterium but addressing a

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 36.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*, p. 37.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 41.

group of pilgrims on September 17, 1876, Pius IX said that on Calvary at the foot of the cross, represented by St. John, we were placed under the protection of Mary as our Mother, by the words of Jesus. . . "Woman behold your son."²⁴ There are many like teachings.

Queen

The last belief under process of doctrination is that of Mary as "Queen."

Carroll says that the Church has called Our Lady "Queen," for centuries, but it comes as a surprise to many to discover that the magisterium, through the statements of the recent popes, and most of all through Pius XII, has presented a strikingly complete picture of Mary's "Queen-ship" in harmony with her other privileges. At the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mary's apparition at Fatima, Portugal, Pius XII called her "Our Mother and Queen. . . ." On October 12, 1945, in a Columbus Day declaration, to the Mexican Marian Congress, when the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was crowned, he said: "For we are certain that as long as you are recognized as Queen and Mother, America and Mexico will be safe."

On May 13, 1946, the Pope delivered an address he has since called his "radio message on the Queenship" when

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

the statue of Our Lady at Fatima was crowned.

. . . Jesus is King throughout all eternity by nature and by right of conquest; through Him, with Him, and subordinate to Him, Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, by right of conquest and by singular election. And her kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion. And this queenship of hers is essentially maternal, exclusively beneficent.²⁵

This idea of Mary as Queen of Heaven has been developed by many artists. While Christ is depicted as the stern judge meeting out punishment, Mary is generally depicted as holding out her hands in mercy for the sinner, or even at times, as restraining Christ's hand. Rubens' painting of "The Last Judgment," shows her as Queen of Heaven. (Plate XIV)

Eustace A. Haydon in his book, *Biography of the Gods*, says that

The austerity of the Christian God during this period (from Clement of Alexandria to Eckhart) frightened simple and sensitive souls. Many, like Bernard of Clairvaux, turned to Christ who shared our human nature for consolation and guidance in the practical way of life. . . . But Christ as the judge of the last assize seemed often as remote and severe as the high God himself. . . .

Lowly folk who did not dare to approach the heavenly presence made their appeal for help to the saints. They were a numerous company, many of them specialized in caring for some particular need.

Most helpful and best beloved of all was the Holy Virgin, Mary, the mother of God and the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Mary's motherhood gave her authority. She alone could stand with unveiled face in the presence of God to plead the cause of needy man. As Queen of Heaven she had royal powers and prerogatives. There

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 45-49.

PLATE XIV

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Rubens, c. 1620



was little likelihood that her Savior son would refuse her requests. 'If you fear to find grace with God,' said St. Bernard, 'have confidence in finding grace with Mary.' Since the third century she has become ever dearer to her devotees. In Catholic circles her glory has grown brighter with the passing of time. Only God himself is worthy of worship higher than hers. . . .²⁶

The trend still continues into the 20th century. On Saturday, May 12, 1973, the writer heard a telecast with Bishop Fulton J. Sheen which closed with a story of Saint Peter complaining that whenever he wanted to close the gate of Heaven on a sinner, that "Mary keeps opening it."²⁷

B. AFTER VATICAN II

The Calling of the Council

On January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII made known to the world that he intended to call an Ecumenical Council. Why? "The long awaited dawn of better times after so many storms and tempests." To promote the spread of the Catholic faith, to show the world the Church of God in her perennial vitality, and

To offer a magnificent demonstration of truth, unity, and love which will be for those who are separated from this Apostolic See a kind invitation to seek and

²⁶Eustace A. Haydon, *Biography of the Gods* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), pp. 266-269.

²⁷Fulton J. Sheen on TV Channel 52, Los Angeles, Ca., May 12, 1973, 9:30 p.m.

find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so fervently to the Father.²⁸

Since this was to be an Ecumenical Council the "separated brethren" were of especial consideration. The writer believes that a shift may be seen in the theology concerning Mary with the calling of this Council. Here, no new doctrine or dogma was promulgated concerning Mary. No separate pronouncement about her was made.

By a small margin of the vote taken on October 29, 1963, "The role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church," was appended as the eighth chapter of the Constitution of the Church. This represents a compromise between those two tendencies in Roman Catholic theology, one of which would emphasize Mary's unique connection with Christ, the Redeemer, and the other with the Church and all the redeemed.²⁹

The eighth chapter is short, concise and plainly and beautifully written. There are no excesses of phrase as in the previous section of this chapter where the pronouncements of many popes were considered. This may have been due to the fact that Pope John specifically asked that phrases of meaningless and hyperbolic compliment in address-

²⁸J. C. Caprile, "Vatican Council II" (St. Louis, Mo., 1961), pp. 6-7.

²⁹Walter M. Abbott (ed.) *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1966), p. 85, n. 256.

ing the pope not be used. Almost all the Fathers had applauded when John's successor, Pope Paul, firmly insisted on Christ's leadership of the Church at his inaugural address and this was taken as a rebuke to those extreme Mariologists who encouraged exaggerated language about the Mother of God.³⁰

Is this the old story of the pendulum swinging too far in one direction and then righting itself? With Pope Pius XII, Mariology seems to have reached its peak.

The main difference that we note is that the exegesis of Biblical passages gives them the literal historical meaning, whereas we have noted above the symbolic and literary-critical method used by Bultmann. This question of hermeneutics keeps coming up.

The eighth chapter of the Constitution of the Church clearly defines Mary's role for the Catholic and, in addition to texts of the Bible for reference, the dogmas just discussed are cited. The chapter is organized into five parts:

- I. Preface
- II. The Role of the Blessed Virgin in the Economy of Salvation
- III. The Blessed Virgin and the Church
- IV. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the Church
- V. Mary, a Sign of Sure Hope and of Solace for God's people in Pilgrimage.

³⁰Christopher Hollis, *The Achievements of Vatican II* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1967), pp. 62-63.

This is the only chapter with headings; and the headings clearly indicate the structure. It starts "Wishing in His supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world," then quotes Gal. 4:4-5 then quotes from the Creed of the Roman Mass: The Constantinopolitan creed (cf. Council of Ephesus, the Council of Chalcedon and the Council of Constantinople II).

54. This paragraph states the purpose of the whole chapter:

Therefore, as it clarifies Catholic teaching concerning the Church, in which the divine Redeemer works salvation, this sacred Synod intends to describe with diligence the role of the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body. It also wishes to describe the duties of redeemed mankind toward the Mother of God, who is mother of Christ and mother of men, particularly to the faithful.

The Role of the Blessed Virgin in the Economy of Salvation

This begins with "The sacred Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament, as well as ancient tradition, show the role of Mother of the Savior in ever clear light and propose it as something to be probed into." This gives the topic of the next five sections (55-59) and throughout this section her proximity to Christ is strongly emphasized. The Biblical passages are given a literal interpretation and closes with "Finally, preserved free from all guilt of original sin, the Immaculate Virgin was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory upon the completion of her earthly

sojourn. She was exalted by the Lord as Queen of all, in order that she might be the more thoroughly conformed to her Son, the Lord of Lords [cf. Apoc. 19:16] and the conquerer of sin and death." (Here the dogma comes in.)

The Blessed Virgin and the Church

60. We have but one Mediator, as we know from the words of the Apostle: (I Tim. 2:5-6). The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. For all the saving influences of the Blessed Virgin in men originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. They flow forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rest on His mediation, depend entirely on it, draw all their power from it. In no way do they impede the immediate union of the faithful with Christ. Rather, they foster this union.

62. The maternity of Mary is discussed. It began at the Annunciation and was sustained without wavering beneath the cross. This maternity will last without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. For taken up into heaven her work still goes on, she did not lay aside this saying role but her manifold acts of intercession continue to win for us gifts of eternal salvation. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and

Mediatrix. These, however, are to be so understood that they neither take away from nor add anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator.

The Council gives the Blessed Virgin the title of Mediatrix, but carefully explains this so as to remove any impression that it could detract from the uniqueness and sufficiency of Christ's position as Mediator (cf. I Tim. 2:5), already referred to in Chapter I.³¹ For no creature could ever be classed with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer.

63. By the gift and role of divine maternity, Mary is united with her Son, and she is also united with the Church. St. Ambrose taught the Mother of God is a model of the Church in the matter of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ. She was the new Eve, who put her absolute trust not in the ancient serpent but in God's messenger.

64. The Church herself contemplating Mary's mysterious sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, becomes herself a mother by accepting God's word in faith. The Church herself is a virgin, who keeps whole and pure the fidelity she has pledged to her Spouse. Imitating the Mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she preserves with virginal purity an integral faith, a firm hope, and a

³¹Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 91, n. 279.

sincere charity.

For Mary figured profoundly in the history of salvation and in a certain way unites and mirrors within herself the central truths of the faith. Mary in her own life lived an example of that maternal love by which all should be fittingly animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church on behalf of the rebirth of men.

66. The Church has endorsed many forms of piety toward the Mother of God, provided that they were within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine.

67. The teachings of the Council of Nicaea II (787) are upheld. This concerned images in addition to the cross to be set forth in the holy churches of God.

So also the venerable and holy images, as well in painting and mosaic as of other fit materials, to wit, the figure of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, of our spotless Lady, the Mother of God, of the honorable Angels, of all Saints and of all pious people. For by so much more frequently as they are seen in artistic representation, by so much more readily are men lifted up to the memory of their prototypes, and to a longing after them. . . . For the honour which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he who reveres the image reveres in it the subject represented. . . .³²

(The Image Controversy, Seventh Ecumenical, Council of Nicaea, 787.)

³²John H. Leith (ed.) *Creeds of the Churches* (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), pp. 55-56.

Mary, A Sign of Sure Hope and of Solace for

God's People in Pilgrimage

It gives great joy and comfort to this most holy Synod that among the separated brethren, too, there are those who give due honor to the Mother of our Lord and Savior. This is especially so among the Easterners, who with ardent emotion and devout mind concur in reverencing the Mother of God, ever Virgin.

69. The above letter was signed by Paul, Bishop of the Catholic Church and the Fathers in Rome at St. Peter's on November 21, 1964.

Before going on to the comments about the Vatican II Synod, the writer would like to point out one line that stood out which will be considered in the conclusion.

For all the saving influences of the Blessed Virgin on men originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. (60)

In comment on the Second Session, the matter came up whether the teaching about Mary should be incorporated in a separate schema on the Church, and we are told there was no difference of opinion among the Fathers about the honor due to the Mother of God nor any sort of demand that the pronouncements about the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption should in any way be abrogated. There was, however, a difference of opinion as to whether there should be further recognition of Mary.

The Marian Movement disciples called for further definitions that would recognize Mary as the sole channel of graces and the like. Such movements are to be found particularly in Italy and other Southern European

countries.

Theologians elsewhere thought that there was a danger in these extravagances. If Mary was the Mother of God, no man of sense would wish to declare any marvel about her to be impossible or indeed even improbable; but there is nothing that we can reasonably say about details of the next life or of the manner in which grace acts except that we do not know how such things work, and it would be dangerous to impose as an obligatory dogma further beliefs about our Lady in heaven that Catholics had done without for two thousand years; for it cannot seriously be argued that there is any scriptural warrant for such things, and their meaning is not wholly comprehensible to man in his present state. It is one thing to accept mysteries that God has revealed and has bidden us to accept. It is quite another to invent mysteries for ourselves.³³

The argument also came up in the previous session when the integralists had wanted to state that Tradition was the one source of Doctrine, and progressives, unwilling to affront Protestants of good will unnecessarily, had asked that the authority of Scripture also be recognized (which it was). The progressives also argued that what is commonly called mariolatry--the ascription to Mary of new and extravagant titles--is one of the main obstacles to reunion. Insofar as it is a refusal by other denominations to refuse to give the position of honor that is due to Our Lady, the Catholic can only regret, he cannot abate from his essential position. But, on the other hand, the Protestant churches accept the creeds that assert the Virgin Birth. Those who were most interested in the ecumenical aspects of

³³Hollis, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

the Council did not wish to put the Church's teachings about Mary into a separate schema because that would imply it was different from its teaching on other topics and the nature of the Church, and they were eager to hasten the day when we would all be one. "On a vote, the ecumenicists carried the day but only by a narrow margin--by 1,114 votes to 1,074."³⁴

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 46.

CHAPTER VI

A PROTESTANT POSITION

Daniel Day Williams says that as one reviews the years 1952-1958, two events in the theological world stand out in public interest. One, the object of this chapter, is the promulgation on November 1, 1953, of the Dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary by the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. The other was the discovery in the caves of the Judean desert of the libraries and other remains of the Qumran community, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Williams says there are two accounts which review the development of this dogma, one by Giovanni Miegge, and the other which he says not many Protestants agree with by C. G. Jung, the Swiss psychologist. In his *Answer to Job*, Jung states that the dogma constitutes the greatest religious event since the Reformation. Williams adds that: "It is clear that the Dogma raises many issues concerning scriptural authority, ecclesiastical authority, tradition, and the relation of liturgy and devotion to theology."¹

A. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL VIEW OF JUNG

Jung says that the promulgation of the new dogma of

¹Daniel Day Williams, *What Present-Day Theologians are Thinking* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 9.

the Assumption of the Virgin Mary points to the popular movement and the psychological need behind it. He says there have been many learned articles written about it but they are mostly dogmatic and historical and have no bearing on living religious process. He says that anyone who had followed the account of the visions of Mary in the last few decades and had taken their psychological significance into account might have known what was brewing. The fact that so many visions came to children should have given pause for thought for in those cases the collective unconscious is always at work. Jung says the Pope himself is rumored to have had several visions of the Mother of God at the time of his declaration.²

Jung says that one could have known for a long time that there was a deep longing in the masses for an intercessor and mediatrix who would at last take her place alongside the Holy Trinity and be received as the "Queen of Heaven and Bride at the Heavenly court."³ In fact, for more than a thousand years it had been taken for granted that the Mother of God dwelt there.

Jung believes that the popular movement which contributed to the Pope's decision to declare the dogma

²C. G. Jung, *Answer to Job* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), p. 165.

³*Ibid.*, p. 166.

consists not in the birth of a new god, but in the continuing incarnation of God which began with Christ. He says that arguments based on historical criticism will never do justice to the new dogma. In the first place, the declaration of the dogma has done nothing in principle in Catholic theology for it has existed for more than a thousand years; and in the second place,

the failure to understand that God has eternally wanted to become man, and for that purpose continually incarnates through the Holy Ghost in the temporal sphere, is an alarming symptom and can only mean that the Protestant standpoint has lost ground by not understanding the signs of the times and by ignoring the continued operation of the Holy Ghost. It is obviously out of touch with the tremendous archetypal happenings in the psyche of the individual and the masses, and with the symbols which are intended to compensate the truly apocalyptic world situation today.⁴

Jung adds in a note that the papal rejection of psychological symbolism may be explained by the fact that the Pope is primarily concerned with the reality of metaphysical happenings. Jung says that if, in physics, one seeks to explain the nature of light, nobody expects that as a result there will be no light, but that in the case of psychology everybody believes that what it explains is explained away. With this idea about psychology, he says, it is understandable that the dogma must be protected from psychologism.⁵

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 167-168.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 168.

Jung believes that Mary's position in heaven satisfies the need of an archetype of woman to match the masculine. He says the feminine like the masculine demands an equally personal representation and that the Church cannot replace the bride. He says that

The logic of the papal declaration cannot be surpassed, and it leaves Protestantism with the odium of being nothing but a *man's religion* which allows no metaphysical representation of woman. In this respect it is similar to Mithraism, and Mithraism found this prejudice very much to its detriment. Protestantism has obviously not given sufficient attention to the signs of the times which point to the equality of women. But this equality requires to be metaphysically anchored in the figure of the 'divine' woman, the bride of Christ.⁶

B. THE DOGMATIC HISTORY OF MIEGGE

Miegge treats the study on the Virgin Mary in a theological basis, with a forward by John A. Mackay, former President of Princeton Theological Seminary, in which the latter deplores the extent to which Mariology has taken away from the saving work of Christ. He says that if as in Protestant evangelism we believe that the risen Christ is still with us and doing his work of saving souls there is no need for another Mediatrix, as Mary is called. Mackay asks the question: Is the Risen Christ a free and contemporaneous spiritual reality? Is he directly accesible

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

to human longing? Is He close to the milling highways of life?" The answers are yes. "Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is a living contemporary Presence, tender, strong, and righteous, Head of the Church and Ruler of the nations." Mackay deplores the fact that:

Today, alas, the blessed Virgin, whom Protestants, too, love, devotedly, is being given a religious status for which there is no Biblical authority and a redemptive role for which there is no spiritual necessity.⁷

He adds that we should continue to let Mary be the greatest and most honored woman who ever lived, and "blessed among women."

Waldo Smith, the translator of Miegge's work, says that "the devotion to Mary, in its operation, hides and virtually negates the warmest and most profound truth in Jesus' teaching--the Fatherhood of God." He adds that

the most familiar representation of Mary in the Roman Catholic churches is as the radiant young mother at the height of her beauty, as often as not wearing a crown as Queen of Heaven. In this representation Mary has become Our Lady, attracting to herself a chivalrous devotion. Most men have the capacity for chivalrous sentiment and it is understandable that for a celibate clergy Mary, as Our Lady, should be an outlet and focal point for this.⁸

Henry Adams noted this chivalrous attitude to Mary in his book, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, where he gives that lovely legend of the juggler doing his juggling for

⁷Giovanni Miegge, *The Virgin Mary* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p. 8.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

Mary, and where he tells how the beautiful cathedrals of France that were built to her in the thirteenth century are architectural witness of the devotion with which the men who built them held for the Virgin Mary. His observation of this phenomenon is noteworthy.

The fact, conspicuous above all other historical certainties about religion, that the Virgin was by essence illogical, unreasonable and feminine, is the only fact of any ultimate value worth studying and starts a number of questions that history has shown itself clearly afraid to touch. Protestants and Catholics differ little in that respect. No one has ventured to explain why the Virgin wielded exclusive power over poor and rich, sinners and saints, alike. Why were all the Protestant churches cold failures without her help? Why could not the Holy Ghost--the spirit of Love and Grace--equally answer their prayers? Why was the Son powerless? Why was Chartres Cathedral in the thirteenth century--like Lourdes today--the expression of what is in substance a separate religion? Why did the gentle and gracious Virgin Mother so exasperate the Pilgrim Father? Why was the woman struck out of the Church and ignored in the State? These questions are not antiquarian or trifling in historical value; they tug at the very heart-strings of all that makes whatever order is in the cosmos. If a Unity exists, in which and toward which all energies centre, it must explain and include, Duality, Diversity, Infinity--Sex!⁹

Walking into Chartres Cathedral on a sunny afternoon, one is transported into a world of radiant colored light in the magnificent stained glass windows. Adams describes them as

they glow in the purity of the colours; the limpidity of the blues; the depth of the red; the intensity of the green; the complicated harmonies; the sparkle and splendour of the light; and the quiet and certain strength of the mass.

⁹Henry Adams, *Mont-Saint Michel and Chartres*

The writer does not have a picture of these beautiful stained glass windows, but since Adams has mentioned the windows at Bourges, she will include the one of the Annunciation there by an unknown master to give an idea of the workmanship and devotion that went into the worship of the Virgin Mary in the medium of glass and architecture in the Cathedrals in France. (Plate XV)

To return from that feminine excursion to Miegge, one may find that he has explored just this subject with great diligence. Miegge is well aware of the problem that has presented itself with the spectacular manifestations of Marian piety, the Marian Congresses, the Marian Year of 1954, the consecration to Mary of entire nations, the pilgrimage of Mary, these are in everyone's thoughts, he says. Equally important is the doctrinal elaboration, he says, and the historical and theological study that flourishes on a scale seldom reached in centuries before.¹⁰

He appreciates the thinking of Roman Catholics who deplore the "humanistic and naturalistic" spirit of the world of lay culture, and understands Romualdo M. Giovanni Evangelista's lament over the youth and even the seminarians themselves who have this world-view. Evangelista's cure for this would be for them to turn to Mary who will

(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), p. 261.

¹⁰Miegge, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

PLATE XV

THE ANNUNCIATION

c. 1447-50



in turn lead them to Christ. "Through Mary to Jesus and through Jesus to the Father!"¹¹

But Miegge does not hold with this solution. He says that there is

no intrinsic evidence why the Gospel, the eternal Gospel of our Saviour Christ Jesus, the Jesus of Nazareth, prophet and master incomparable, of the Crucifixion of Golgotha and of the Resurrection, should not be able to address itself directly to a generation confused and lost as ours is, without going through the psychological and theological mediation of Marian piety. . . . Has the Gospel lost for it its own intrinsic evidence that it has to be recovered and preached again through Marian piety and Marian thought? By what fatality, historical and spiritual, has Mary become the necessary mediatrix of Jesus?¹²

Miegge traces the growth of the doctrine of the Assumption through the ages very carefully and brings his account up to the year 1854 when the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was propounded. He says there is a connection between this and the doctrine of the Assumption. He says it is not to be wondered at that in 1870 when papal infallibility was defined, that an attempt was made by a number of bishops to get a pronouncement on the doctrine of the Assumption as a verity of faith. This was preceded by a petition started by Queen Isabella of Spain at the insistence of her confessor. But the council made no decision saying that "the time has not yet come."¹³

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

The petitioning movement then was extended without interruption for a twenty-year period, 1920-1940, assuming the scale of plebiscites. At the end of the latter year these gathered more than eight million signatures, especially in Italy, Spain and Latin America. It is significant, Miegge says, that the nations of western and northern Europe, France, Belgium and Germany where the most modern and critical standards of Catholic culture are to be found, followed only at a great distance and seemingly without too much enthusiasm. In the figures given by M. Jugie, Spain appears with 1,689,911 signatures as against 137,390 from France, so there was no real unanimity.¹⁴

In order for a belief to become dogma three conditions are essential: the Biblical basis, the consensus of the earliest tradition, and theological value. There remain the theological reasons, that is, the arguments of "appropriateness" that we have seen at work from the beginnings of the doctrine of the Assumption. Miegge traces Father Roschini's account of the development. Appropriateness does not establish a historical fact, Miegge affirms, and if God did not really do what was appropriate, right, inevitable that he should do, upon whom would the reproach fall? Upon the Most High or his Servants? ¹⁵

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 103.

We come now to the year 1950 and the Bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, containing the dogma of the Assumption, which Miegge claims is a real departure from the accustomed traditionalism of Catholic theology, and is an important document in the dogmatic development of Catholicism. The Biblical and patristic proof of the dogma is extremely weak; one could even say that nothing is done to conceal this weakness, as though it were considered to be of no importance. The real foundation of the dogma, Miegge says, is on the one hand the consensus of the Church of the present time, and on the other, its theological "suitability." He says that the argument from the consensus of the Church is developed with such amplitude and solemnity that it is clear for the Roman theologians that it is the only necessary and sufficient one. What the Church believes and that which it teaches must be considered as revealed truth. The premise of the principle is evident, Miegge writes, for the Authority has been given to conserve the deposit of faith, therefore, whatever it proclaims must be said to be in accord with the deposit of faith. And if history proves the contrary, he says, so much the worse for history!¹⁶

Miegge pleads for the courage to initiate the great return from Mary to Christ. He says this would not be

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

impossible, that it would be enough to stop encouraging the worst exaggerations of the popular Marian devotion, or, directly, to stop patronizing them. Miegge says that it would be enough to inculcate from top to bottom throughout the hierarchy a return to sanity and to evangelical simplicity, and to lead Mary back to a place in the Church which no one would deny her for her gentleness and the values of humanity. This would also be an advantage for reunion of the divided members of Christ. But, alas, Miegge says there are no signs this will happen.¹⁷

Miegge does not see anything but a growth of more doctrine, and a substitution of symbols of Mary for Christ. He says this will not be without precedent for actually in the hellenistic era, Isis had come to occupy the first place in Egyptian devotion. He does not want to make a parallel with comparative religions, but says that at times it seems that in Catholicism the figure of Jesus Christ as the central religious symbol has become somewhat worn out (*abbia subito un certo logoramento*). Miegge says that of course Christ will not be forgotten, that he will continue as the center of official honors.

But the real diffusive and persuasive force, the real religious fascination, the real function of effectively focusing the faith and love and devotion of the masses will be exercised entirely by the Virgin Mary. On that

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

day it will be said that within Catholicism Christianity has given up the field to a different religion.¹⁸

Before leaving Miegge we would like to point to the theology of "justification by faith" which Luther recovered of the pure mercy of God in Christ, the Gospel of grace without merit and beyond merit. Miegge compares this with the theology of Alfonso of Liguori whose edifying stories all tell of Mary's mercy, unexpected, undeserved, striking, which produces conversion and penitence that lead to a holy life and, customarily, soon afterwards to a devout death. He says this affinity does not surprise us when we know that they both go back to the same fount of piety, the mysticism of St. Bernard.

The Bernardian theme of love for no other reason but itself, of love that loves because it loves: the theme of limitless grace that knows no sin so great that it cannot triumph: a grace that is essentially beyond merit or justice or fear, this is the real meaning of 'justification by faith' whether Lutheran or in the Marian piety of Liguori.¹⁹

C. THE ECUMENICAL VIEW OF MACQUARRIE

John Macquarrie has a short section on "The Blessed Virgin Mary," in his *Principles of Christian Theology*. He says that while Mariology is a more peripheral theme than others that he has discussed and that it could be discussed either in relation to christology or ecclesiology, of course

¹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 190-191. ¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 144, 151.

those two being closely related, that he will choose to discuss it with ecclesiology. He adds that no ecumenical theology could afford to ignore it, that if the divisions of Christendom are to be overcome it can only be through frank discussion of the issues and not by avoiding them. He quotes Max Thurian, a distinguished Protestant who has recently written a book on Mariology, and who says that instead of being a cause of division among us that reflection on the role of the Virgin Mary should be a cause for rejoicing and a source of prayer, that it is both theologically essential and spiritually profitable to consider the vocation of Mary with some freedom.²⁰

Macquarrie feels that the best clue to the interpretation of her place in the New Testament teaching is afforded by the title "Mother of the Church." He notes that this is the title which Pope Paul VI proclaimed as appropriate to the Blessed Virgin when he adjourned the Vatican Council in 1964, and Macquarrie thinks this interpretation of Mary's place provides a ground on which Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants could agree.²¹

²⁰John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), pp. 351-352.

²¹Hollis (cf. Chapter V), says that "this insertion of this title was clearly a sop to the Mariologies. It made a verbal gesture to them without conceding any real point and was therefore in tune with the pope's general policy of preventing the Council from becoming in any way a trampling ground of victors over vanquished. But there

Macquarrie gives two reasons for considering her the "Mother of the Church." The first is because the Blessed Virgin has a certain priority in the Church, as one who played an indispensable part in the drama of incarnation and salvation for the Christian faith. Second, she is a prototype of the church just as Israel might be called a prototype of the church. He is thinking of parallels here, for what we see in Mary we should see in the church, that is, her free cooperative obedience in the incarnation which is also demanded today if God is to be present and active in our world. He notes that St. Paul called the church, "Mother," but adds that he also called it "bride," and that we should not push such analogies too far.²²

Macquarrie quotes Kierkegaard whom he says has some very perceptive remarks about Mary's relation to Christ's suffering. He sees the same motif of self-emptying in Mary's experiencing something of what Christ experienced in his cry of dereliction; and that Mary's suffering is experienced in turn by every disciple who knows "the complete emptying of the human element in the fact of God."²³

were some who wondered whether it was altogether dignified that honorific titles to the Mother of God should be used for such a purpose."

Christopher Hollis, *The Achievements of Vatican II* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1967), pp. 62-63.

²²Macquarrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 353-354.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 356; quoting from *The Last Years*, pp. 38-

Macquarrie does not think there is any supposed relation between reverence for the Blessed Virgin and the need for a feminine element in religion. He says it may well be true, as a matter of historical fact, that the veneration of the Virgin is related to ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worship of the Mother Goddess, just as many other features of Christian worship have pagan precursors. Macquarrie adds that the Virgin may satisfy a psychological need missed by a too masculine conception of God; and that reverence is warmer and more personal than the austere virtues of the Puritans. But these considerations, he says, have no bearing on the theological question about Mary and that Berdyaev is completely correct when he affirms that reverence for the Blessed Virgin "is distinctly distinct from pagan worship of the female principle."²⁴

In our study of Miegge, he has pointed out that the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ is one of the grandest themes of Christianity. He says that Father Nicholas was quite right when he pointed out that the co-redemption of Mary and of the Church is the critical point that separates Catholicism and Protestantism. He says that Protestants can accept Mary as a symbol of the Church but

40, 111.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 356-357; quoting from *The Beginning and the End*, p. 246.

for Catholic Mariology she is the real source of the Church. That is why he says that the hope of Mary as symbol of the Church can be the meeting ground of a common appreciation of Mary by Catholics and Protestants. "On the Protestant side there can be nothing but a clear-cut refusal."²⁵

D. THE EVANGELICAL POSITION OF OBERMAN

Heiko A. Oberman in *The Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective*, gives in summary form some of the happenings in Christian tradition of the role of the Virgin Mary in both the Protestant and Catholic Churches. He points out that the "Brethren" to whom the theologian is committed means the whole Church. He says the reformed tradition has never lost sight of the fact that the hidden communion of the faithful may well extend into post-Tridentine Catholicism as much as to Orthodoxy and neo-Protestantism. He says that a confession can only hope to be catholic when it exposes itself to the whole Church, including its heretical aberrations. It is in that light that he deals with his theme of the Virgin Mary.²⁶

As to the question of hermeneutics, Oberman says that the Catholics have used a synthetic hermeneutic, that

²⁵Miegge, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

²⁶Heiko A. Oberman, *The Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 3-4.

is, an exegesis of texts in Scripture or tradition which agreed with the magisterium, and that Protestant exegesis has been analytical. He, of course, modifies this by saying that there is a group of Catholic scholars which is as much committed to "secular" codes of scholarship as its Protestant counterpart. However, he adds that Biblical scholarship in the past which underlies Mariological developments must be classed as apologetic rather than as biblical theology.²⁷

Oberman, a great scholar of the Reformation period, tells us that Martin Luther, who was very devoted to the Virgin Mary, once in his pastoral concern for all the Brethren and responsible for the true understanding of the faith, said: "I could wish that the cult of Mary would be completely abrogated, solely because of abuse." Mariology could not possibly be a side issue for the Reformers because it touched so directly on their common main theme, the redemption by God in Jesus Christ, Oberman says. The warm praise which Luther had for the mother of God was based not upon the great qualities of Mary herself, but on the grace granted to her. Oberman continues that

when Luther in 1535 attacks the theme of Mary, the mother of mercy, as contrasted with Christ, the judge, this is not an ad hoc reference but the outgrowth and application of his discovering of the meaning of *institia*. In his Commentary on the Psalms, 1513-15,

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

Luther insists that in Christ mercy and righteousness are united and that when one destroys this unity, Christ is no longer *veritas* but has become *severitas*!²⁸

Calvin, with his clear thinking, shows the way between "honor where honor is due" and superstitious adoration. He says that

Elizabeth takes the *via media* which we should follow: i.e. she honors the Virgin, inasmuch as Mary was honored by God. . . . But at the same time she does not stop at this point. . . she shows that the Virgin Mary has no dignity of herself but that rather everything hinges on God's wish to accept her.²⁹

And so we close our discussion of the role of Mary in the Christian religion on a note of hope that somewhere there may be acceptance by all, Catholic and Protestant alike, of this gracious girl of Israel who was chosen to be the mother of our Lord, but at the same time let us honor her and not the Dogmas that have encrusted her real worth--the *via media*.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 21, 24.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 23.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: A *VIA MEDIA*

The development of the role of Mary in the Christian tradition has been traced. The problem has been how to give Mary her due without compromising the central redeeming work of Christ and to show through the use of art how the quality of tenderness has been portrayed in the life of Mary.

The female principle in religion as it prevailed in the cults of Isis and the Great Mother Cybele has been noted. The importance of the cult of the Ashtarothe has been treated as a threat to Yahwism when the Israelites entered Canaan.

In the Canonical Gospels, the stories of Mary's Annunciation, the Visitation to Elizabeth, the Birth of Jesus in the accounts of Matthew and Luke have been traced. Mary's expression, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, Be it unto me according to thy word!" places her in the same position of obedience to God as does Jesus' words, "Not my will, but thine be done." Because of her acceptance of that role, she is seen to have been called by God into a special relationship to him. The Holy Spirit is the creative element that will overshadow her. She shall bear a son and call his name Jesus for he will save the people

from their sins. These are the promises that God makes to her through the angel Gabriel.

We have seen the glory of the Epiphany when the shepherds beheld a great light at the birth of Jesus. At the Incarnation something unique happened. God had come to earth as a babe born in a manger, and the world would never be the same again.

How to give Mary honor for the part she has played in the Incarnation? She herself says all generations will call her blessed.

There was tension between Jesus and his mother during the time that he first went to the Temple and tarried there and when he was preaching and working with his disciples. She could not quite comprehend all that was happening.

Then, at the Crucifixion, in John's Gospel Mary stands under the cross. Some theologians do not give this historical credence since it is not mentioned in the Synoptics, but a great deal of the dogma of co-redemptrix in the Catholic faith is built upon this scene, as has the phrase, "Woman behold your Son," -- "Behold your Mother!" been made the basis for her role of Mother of the Church and spiritual Mother of all believers.

From the Canonical Gospels we have examined the *Protevangelium of James*, the apocryphal account of Mary's life and the birth of Jesus. Many of the later dogmas of

the Catholic church are said to have had their beginnings here. This text is partly legend and partly dependent upon the Gospels. In it we see a "filling out" in the life of Mary. This is really her story and not the story of Jesus. It tells of her parents, Joachim and Anna, and of Mary's miraculous birth. Her presentation at the temple after a very tender and protected period in her mother's bed-chamber is recounted. At the temple she is given the task of weaving the royal colors, the scarlet and the gold. The *Protevangelium* then gives the account of how Joseph won Mary by lot at the Temple. Joseph in this account had been married before and had sons by another marriage and this was later used by Catholic theologians to account for the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus, as called by some, others said they were "cousins." At any rate the *post partum* could be given credence in the doctrine of "ever Virgin."

At the scene of the nativity of Mary all nature stands still for a moment and a sense of awe of a great event coming to be is created.

The scene of the midwives is not in good taste but it is without doubt inserted to prove Mary's virginity *in partu*, with the witness of two women, the midwife and Salome.

From these texts studied we have moved into the realm of the Church. The early Baptismal Creeds, the

Nicene Creed, the Apostles Creed, the *Theotokos* of the Council of Ephesus (431) are shared by Protestants and Catholics alike.

Then we entered the realm of the teaching of the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church and the making of dogma. Here is a different atmosphere altogether. The Deposit of the Catholic Church is the accumulated teaching, dogma, doctrine and tradition that has been gathered by the Church throughout the years. It never changes, but it can be interpreted anew and added to.

Here we have seen how the doctrines of the "Ever Virgin," the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption of the Virgin, grew into dogma when they were so defined by the solemn magisterium, and are now declared beliefs of the faith proclaimed *ex cathedra*. We have also seen how other beliefs, not yet made dogma, such as "Full of Grace," "Co-redemptrix," "Dispensatrix," "Spiritual Mother," and "Queen of Heaven," have been a part of the ordinary magisterium and while not dogma are believed as a part of the teaching power of the ordinary magisterium. The adoration of Mary and the proclamation of dogma reached a peak under the pontificate of Pope Pius XII.

We have made a study of Vatican II (1963-1964), where we see a definite shift in emphasis on Mariology. This Council was called by Pope John XXIII with an express purpose of being an Ecumenical Council which would try to

speak to the separated brethren, as well as other matters. One way of doing this would be through Mary, Pope John believed.

By a close margin of forty votes at the Second Session the decision was made to include the article on the Virgin Mary in with the other articles on the Church. Thus Mary's role not only with Christ but with the Church was defined for the first time. This was done rather than to have the article on Mary as a separate document and was considered a victory for the progressives with an eye for ecumenical unity.

We consider the Chapter VIII of Vatican II, which defines Mary's role, as a shift from the direction the magisterium was going under Pope Pius XII. The place of Christ as sole Mediator is stressed in II.60, as it was by the Pope at the beginning of the Session. This is the Biblical text of I Tim. 2:5-6: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." The titles of the Blessed Virgin as Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix can be invoked by the faithful but they are to be understood so "that they neither take away from nor add anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator." (III.62)

There were no new dogmas proclaimed, as some had hoped and anticipated, a sign of conciliation in itself.

It was like a cool drink of clear water for the writer after wading through all the excesses of Mariology in Carol's *Mariology*. We ask, has a new trend come as the Roman Catholics and the Protestants look forward to an Ecumenical age? One of the great problems in rapprochement or unity will be the role of Mary in the Christian religion. That is why we have felt that any study of her is not only enlightening, it is necessary.

The Protestant position has been viewed through the eyes of C. G. Jung, the Swiss psychologist, as he has said that the Dogma of the Assumption is the greatest happening in religion since the Reformation. While the writer cannot agree with this, it is important to listen to what Jung has to say about the creative aspects of Mary in the life of religion, and of women in general as they are now taking a more active part.

Henry Adams, who has noted the irrational and feminine element in the love and devotion given to Mary in the building of Chartres and Mont-Saint-Michel during the thirteenth century, also gives a note of warning that the element of the feminine in religion should not be ignored.

We have carefully studied Miegge as the Protestant who has most spoken out against the cult of Mary. Coming from the heart of Mary's stronghold, Rome, he is an authority on what has been happening there in the magisterium throughout the years. He sees the worship of Mary taking

over the place of Jesus Christ in the Roman Catholic religion. He cites I Tim. 2:5-6: Christ is the only Redeemer that we need and Mary is not necessary.

Miegge said there could be a shift in Mariology extravagances if the hierarchy would so proclaim from the top to the bottom. The writer believes this is just what was beginning to happen at Vatican II. There was a change of emphasis away from Mary toward the soul redemptive work of Christ, again I Tim. 2:5-6. Miegge's book was written in 1955, the work of the Second Session was in 1964. Can we hope his voice has been heard?

But we are still far apart. The Deposit does not disappear overnight and the new way of declaring dogma because the people petition for it and because it is appropriate (Miegge), does not take much account of New Testament texts or of history. Regretfully the writer finds her position now in her present stage of study much like that of Dr. K. E. Skydsgaard, who has seen that the union of the basic ecumenical problems is the figure of Mary.

Evangelical theology knows that this teaching point. . . has often been distorted, and knows that it has a duty to clarify the Roman insights on this point as authentically and reliably as possible. But as Evangelical theology gains insight into the Roman view of this questions, and sees how completely penetrating the role of Mariology is and how intimately it is knit into the deepest motives in Roman Catholicism, it grows in

understanding how different the Evangelical and Roman Catholic traditions are.¹

As to the theology of tenderness that Mary exemplifies, we believe that it can be discovered in the Canonical Gospels. Miegge also writes of it when he says that Luther and Liguori go back to the same fount of piety, St. Bernard. Liguori's stories of the Virgin all point to the unmerited mercy that she gives out. Miegge says that Luther's "justification by faith" and Mary's love for love's sake only, are limitless grace, whether in the Marian piety of Liguori or of the Lutheran doctrine.

One phrase in Vatican II was particularly meaningful to the writer: "For all the saving influences of the Blessed Virgin on men originate, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure." (III.60)

These graces of Mary, her saving influence, go out from the divine pleasure, not from some inner necessity. When we are speaking of the divine pleasure we are not far from St. Paul, St. Augustine or Calvin. This we point out in contradiction to Barth's statement that

In the doctrine and worship of Mary there is disclosed the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church which explains all the rest. The 'mother of God' of Roman Catholic Marian dogma is quite simply the principle, type, and essence of the human creature co-operating

¹Heiko A. Oberman, *The Virgin Birth in Evangelist Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. vii; quoting from K. Skydsgaard, *One in Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), p. 207.

servantlike in its own redemption on the basis of prevenient grace, and to that extent the principle type and essence of the Church.²

Of course "one swallow does not make a summer," but we point to this statement of Vatican II (III.60) because it puts the emphasis on God's grace where it belongs, "but from the divine pleasure."

As to the method of "doing" theology by art, we have inserted the copies of paintings of the Virgin Mary without comment thinking they would speak in their own way. Through artwork around the world, the person of Mary has been depicted by sculpture such as the Pieta, and paintings such as we have included. The tenderness theme is here, and also the inbreaking of the light of God at the Incarnation as shown in Mathias Grünewald's painting.

The writer hopes there is some *via media* that will retain for Protestants the principle of tenderness that Mary typifies.

Mary has a special potency in the faith of Catholics as they repeat their Rosary, "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." This last passage is feared by all of us. That last and most grim enemy of all takes our loved ones with his grim on-coming step while we stand helplessly by. Nothing will stop him, not our most fervent

²*Ibid.*; quoting from Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1956), I/2, 143.

prayers or even medical science at times. God seems to retire at a time like this. We are left only with our love one and encroaching death. What will stem his advance? Nothing, and we know it! But what might make it easier for our loved one? Tenderness.

If we can somehow get across to the dying one that love is the only important thing in the world after all. Perhaps he is heavily sedated or only semi-conscious. How are we to reach him? Touch. Tenderly to touch him. His hands, his feet, his heart. But most of all to stroke his brow and to say tenderly, "I love you."

Tenderly--tenderness--what a conveyor of love! A tender look, a tender word, a tender sigh. The language of love is the language of tenderness.

And tenderness is an art of the ministry. Doctor of Ministry. What does it mean? What does it mean to minister to others? It means for one thing to speak tenderly.

Comfort, comfort my people
says your God
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 40:1-2)

We do not believe that Mary has any substantial connection with the goddesses of the past. We do not believe that she is merely a psychological projection. We believe that she is a unique theological person in her own right as the bearer of the Incarnation. We look forward to

greater study by Protestant theologians in this field.

Michelangelo's Pieta has been repaired now and placed on a pedestal back in the Basilica in Rome, safely encased with a plate of glass.

The haunting tenderness of another Pieta will be our Plate XVI to show another expression of the sorrow of Mary at the death of her son and our Lord.

The Image Controversy in 787 stressed the importance of using objects of art in the spreading of the worship of Mary among the faithful. We hope that the use of illustrations in this dissertation, in addition to the texts used, has convincingly shown how art has had an important influence in extolling the role of Mary throughout Christendom.

PLATE XVI

Pieta
(detail)

Jean Fouquet, 1470 (?)



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